COLLECTION OF ENTHNOGRAPHIC ART

DOGON LADDER

Dogon ladders are used by the Dogon people to access the upper levels of granaries, climb onto the flat roofs of houses, and bridge clefts in cliffs. Though in fact used by many peoples in the southern part of West Africa, these ladders are most commonly associated with the Dogon. Wooden granary ladders such as the one in the PLU collection are first and foremost utilitarian objects, and have a simple and practical design.

The step like notches would have been carved out of a naturally forked tree with an adze, and one can easily see the short, horizontal marks left on the wood from carving. The Y-shape at the top of the ladder is flattened slightly in the back to enhance stability, and the rub of hands and feet on the wood from use gives the steps their smooth and glossy appearance, called patina. Though intended for everyday use, Dogon granary ladders such as this can be found in many African art collections and are particularly popular for use in interior design because of their simplistic and abstract use of form.

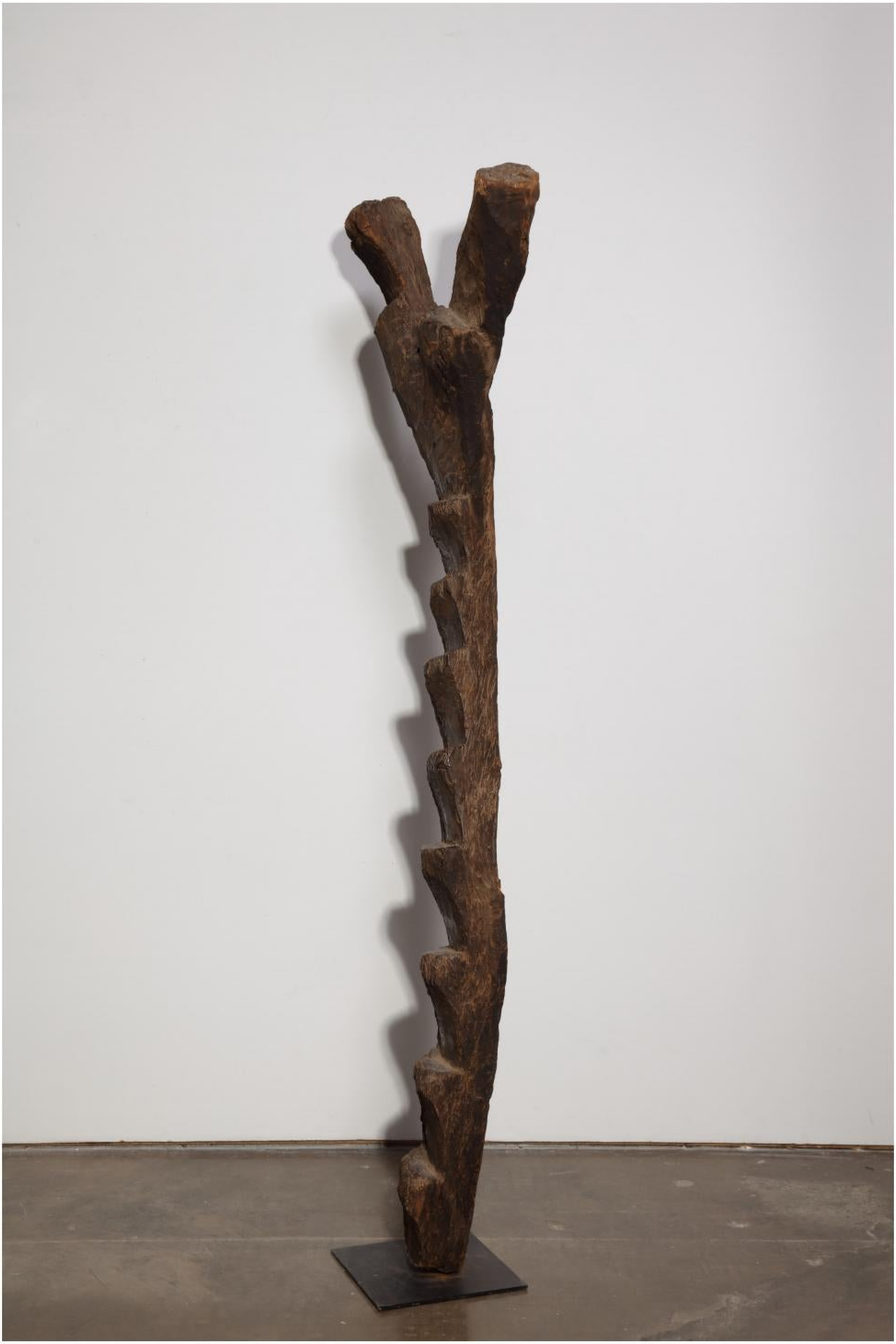
The Dogon mainly live in southwest Mali and parts of northwest Burkina Faso, constructing their adobe villages among the cliffs in an area that is relatively inaccessible and rugged. Agriculture is an essential part of survival and the Dogon primarily grow sorghum and millet for local consumption and onions to sell in markets as a cash crop.

Granaries for storing sorghum and millet play a particularly important role in Dogon life, and in a typical village granaries may even outnumber houses. The Dogon are among the most well known and most studied people groups in Africa, and are especially popular with tourists seeking an “authentic” African experience untouched by time or modernity. In truth, the Dogon have been adapting and evolving through time just like any culture, and the tourist trade itself has had a large impact.

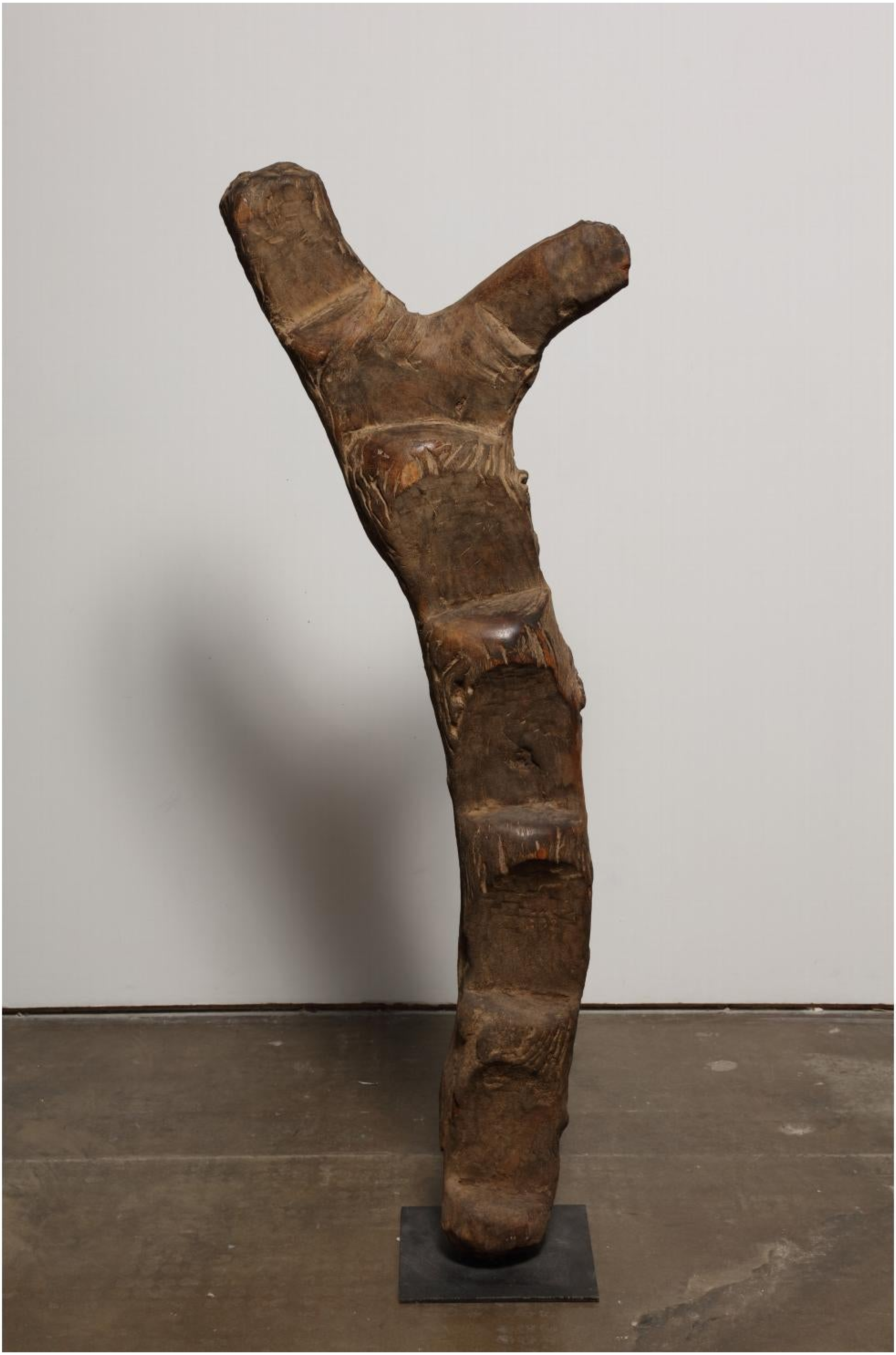
- Megan Wonderly

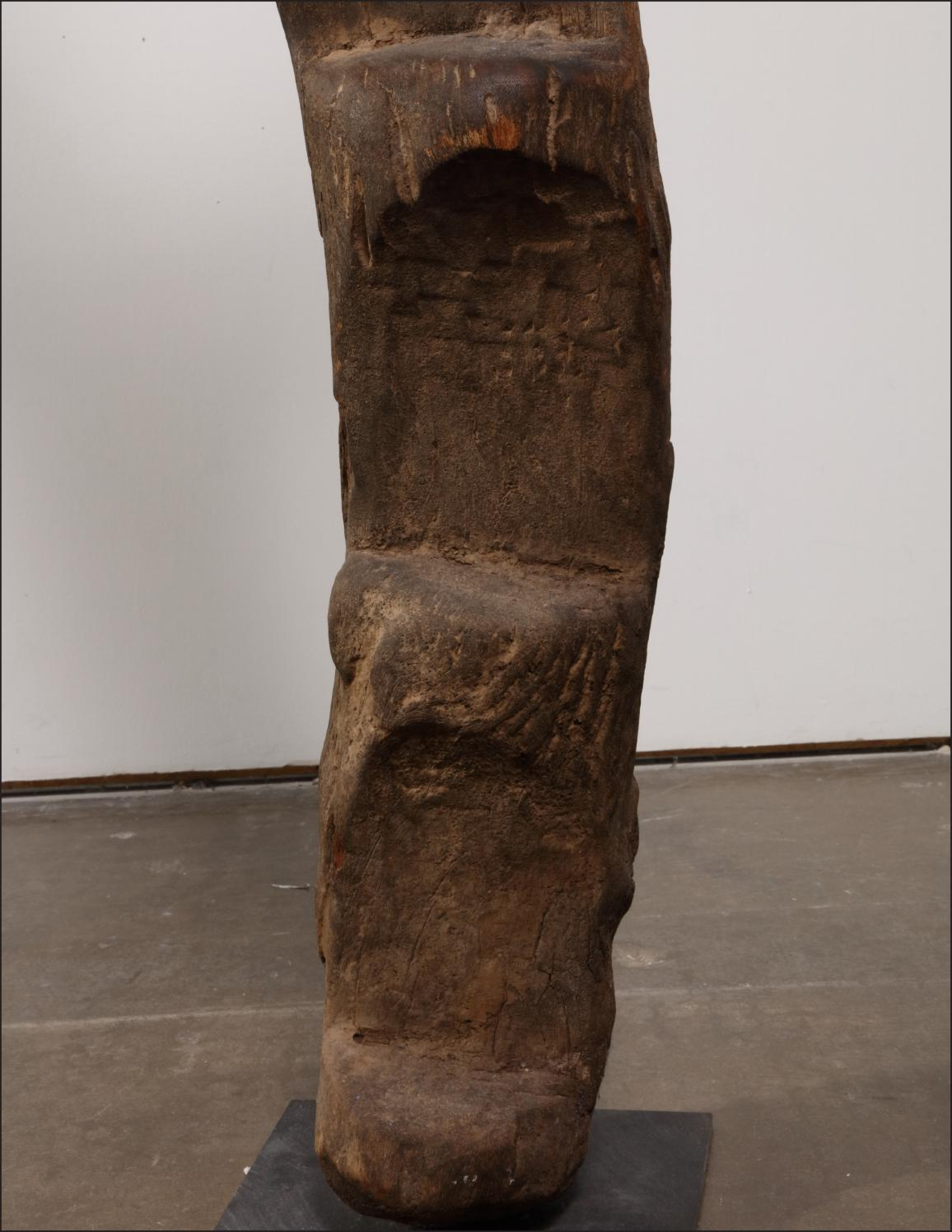
DOGON LADDER (MALI) | Carved Wood | 98 x 8 x 8 Inches

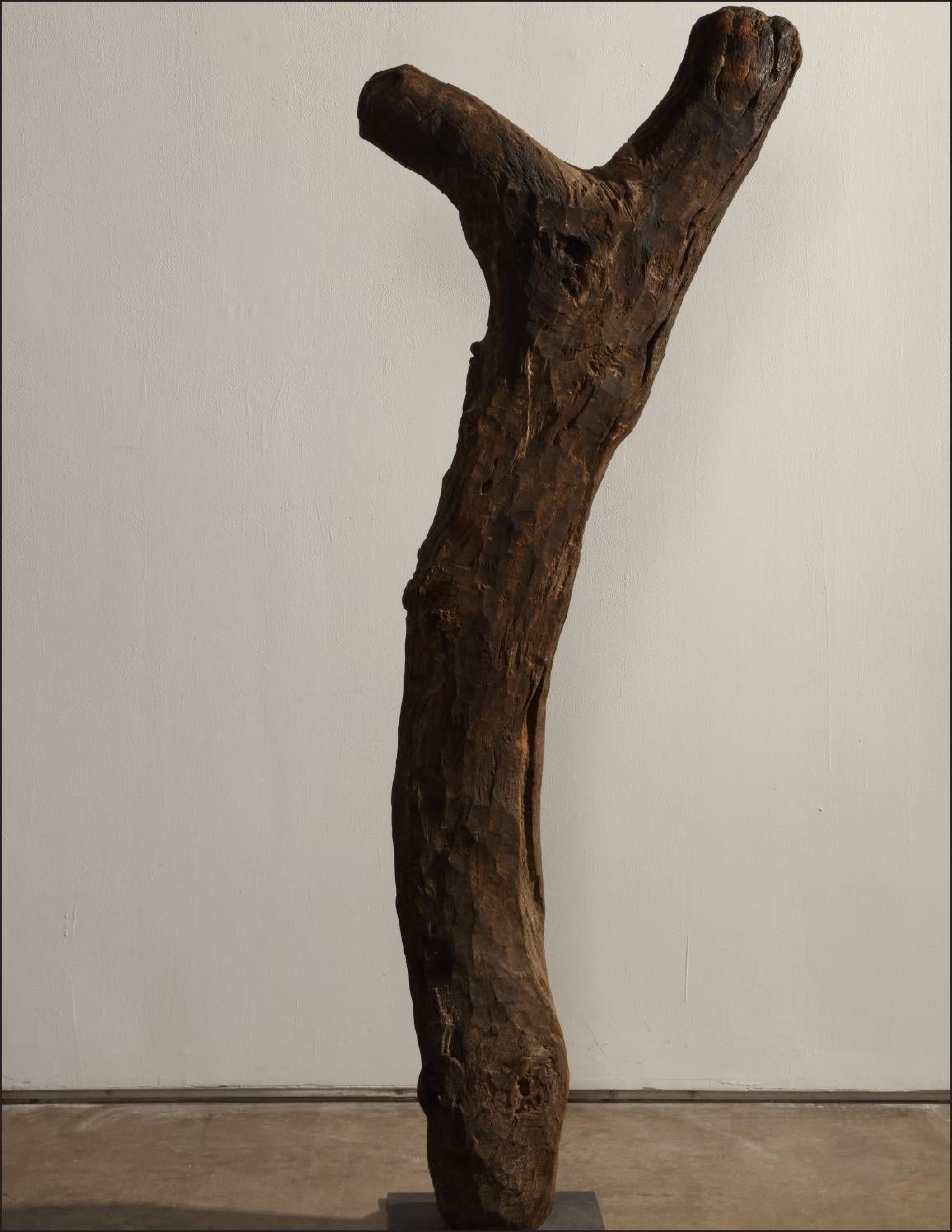
DOGON LADDER | **EARLY 19TH CENTURY** | Carved Wood | 80 x 24 x 7 Inches

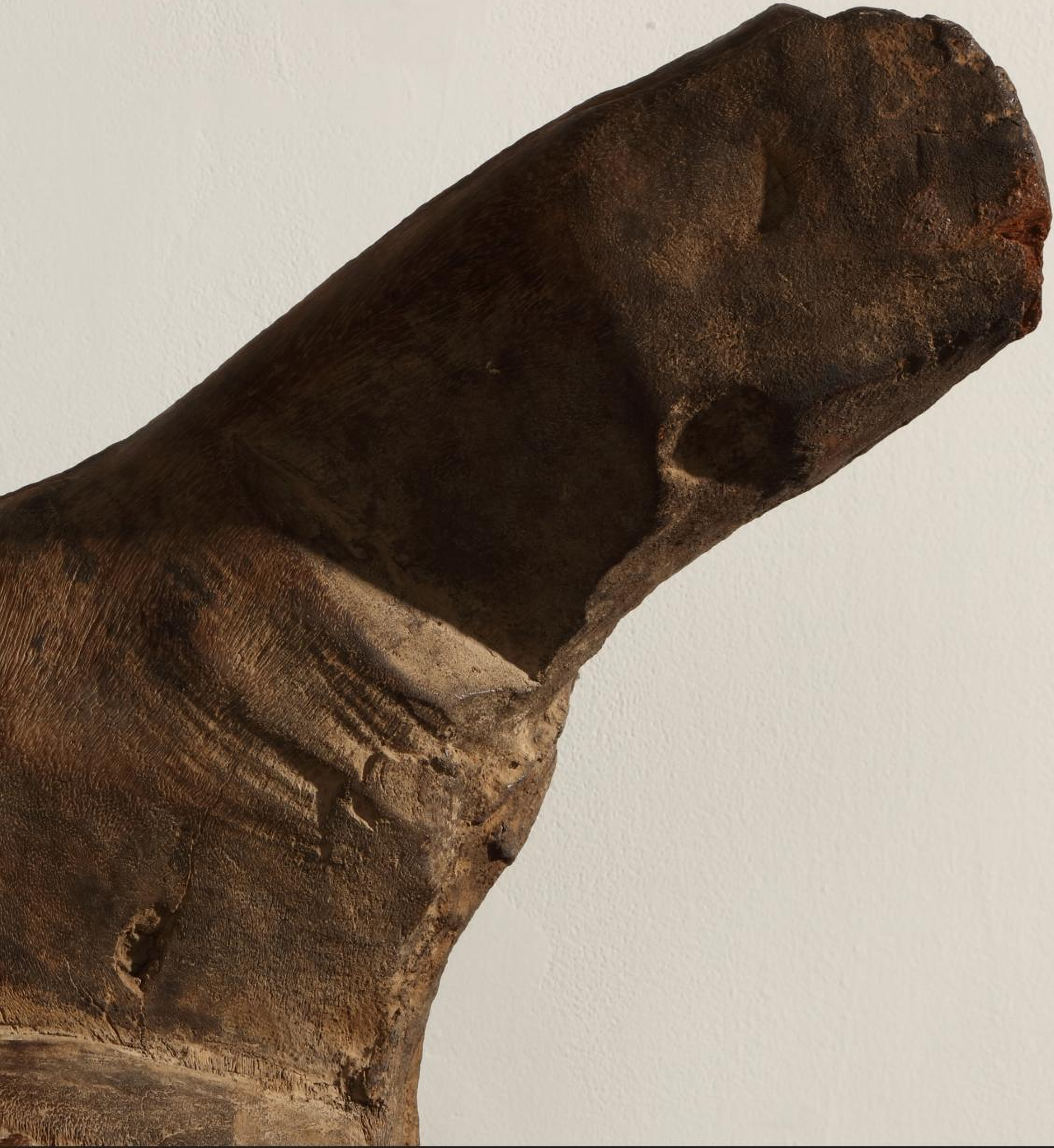


DOGON LADDER | LATE 18TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 54 x 17 x 5 Inches









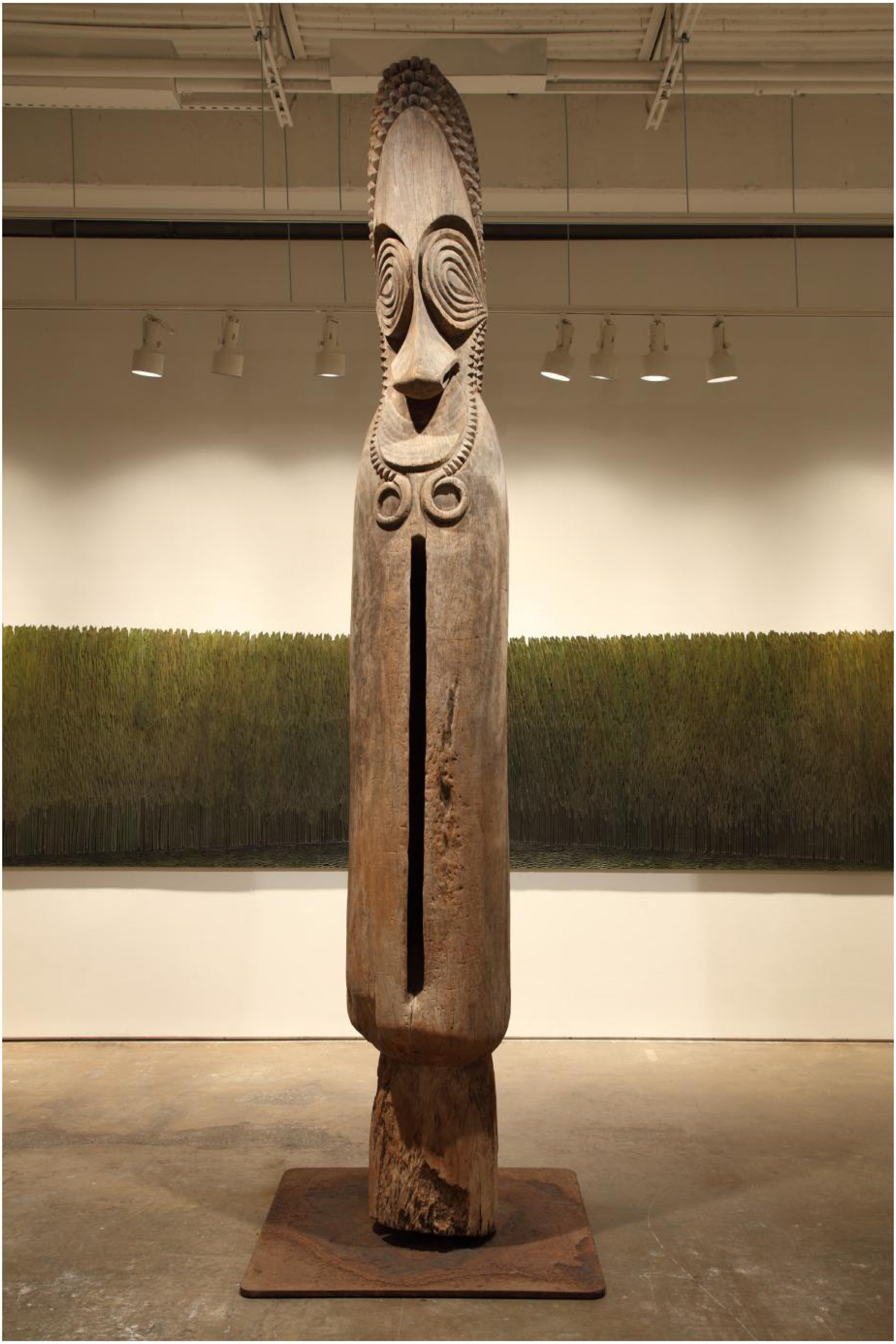
VANUATU

FRENCH POLYNESIA

Vanuatu is a South Pacific Ocean nation made up of roughly 80 islands that stretch 1,300 kilometers. Vanuatu was first inhabited by Melanesian people. The first Europeans to visit the islands were a Spanish expedition led by Portuguese navigator Fernandes de Queirós, who arrived on the largest island, Espíritu Santo, in 1606. Queirós claimed the archipelago for Spain, as part of the colonial Spanish East Indies, and named it La Austrialia del Espíritu Santo. The history of Vanuatu before European colonization is mostly obscure because of the lack of written sources up to that point, and because only limited archaeological work has been conducted. Vanuatu's volatile geology and climate is also likely to have destroyed or hidden many prehistoric sites.

Vanuatu, previously known as the New Hebrides, is an archipelago of islands in the South Pacific area of Melanesia. The population of approximately 40,00 consists primarily of Ni-Vanuatu, some European expatriates and other Pacific Islanders. Prior to independence in 1980 Vanuatu was governed by the United Kingdom and France. French, English and Bislama are the local languages.

Vanuatu continues to believe and practice many of aspects of its traditional culture. Outside of Port Villa, most of the population live in small villages where Chiefs maintain power and authority and "Clevers" (sorcerers) are highly regarded–and feared. The arts relating to these traditional cultures remain strong and vibrant. Its diversity and excellence are among the best in Oceania.



SLIT GONG DRUMS

Slit gong drums are made from hollowed-out tree trunks and played using a piece of wood small enough to fit inside the slit. Different tones are achieved depending on where the drum is being hit (inside or outside) and the thickness of the wood. Drums from Vanuatu are played upright.

Carving styles differ from island to island. Some depict spirits, but most are ancestor heads or ancestors.Each culture, each clan might have a specific meaning for each particular design that they use. Just from the design anybody from that area will be able to recognize, “Oh, that’s the design of this particular clan.” And there will be a certain history or story or symbolism associated with the design.

Found on the ceremonial grounds of villages, usually in pairs, slit-gong drums are used to receive messages from ancestors and sacred spirits, but they serve a practical purpose, too. They are used to communicate important events or to send messages to the community, communicate with other villages, and to alert the village to the arrival of visitors. They have their own special tone that each member of the village recognizes. So you’ll be walking in the bush and all of a sudden you’ll hear this “boom-boom-boom’ ‘boom-boom-boom-boom” of the drum and people will stop in their tracks and listen, and then they’ll know who sent it and what the message was.

VANUATU RARE CHIEF TOFOR SLIT GONG DRUM #1 | EALRY TO MID 20TH CENTURY

Carved Wood | 149 x 20 x 24 Inches

FERN TREE INITIATION FIGURE VANUATU POLYNESIA

This Fern Tree Grade is Known as a “Berangtor”, this figure is shown with the carver, Gemgem of Metamili village, after its first ceremonial use with the bright colors painted over tree sap and charcoal base. One of only three extant figures of this type.

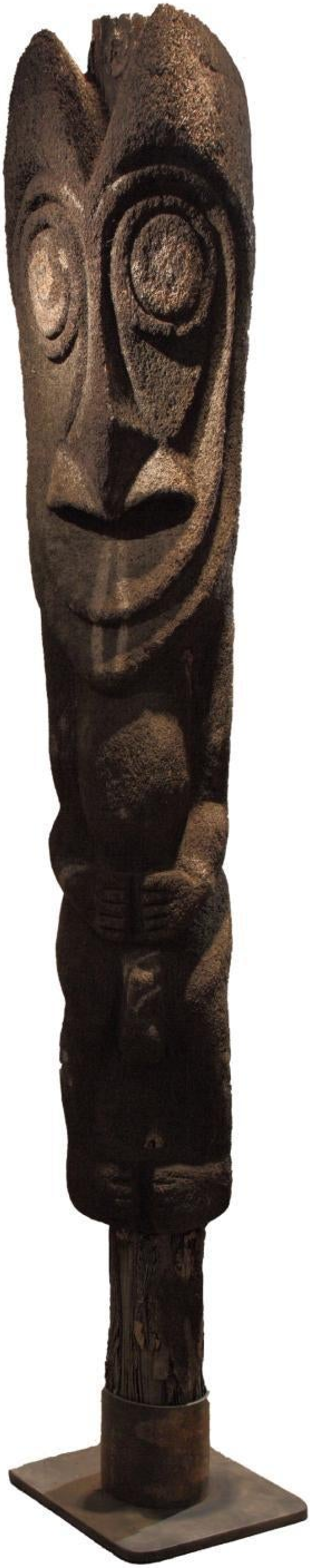
The head is an ancestor, the carving around the top depicts hair, the curves under the mouth represent pig tusks which are highly valued. One side of the drum is carved out more than the other so that the tone will be different. The quality of the carving is very important (that the nose be carved through) otherwise villagers will say that it is a “rubbish drum”. These are the largest drums in Oceania, reaching heights of up to 30 feet.

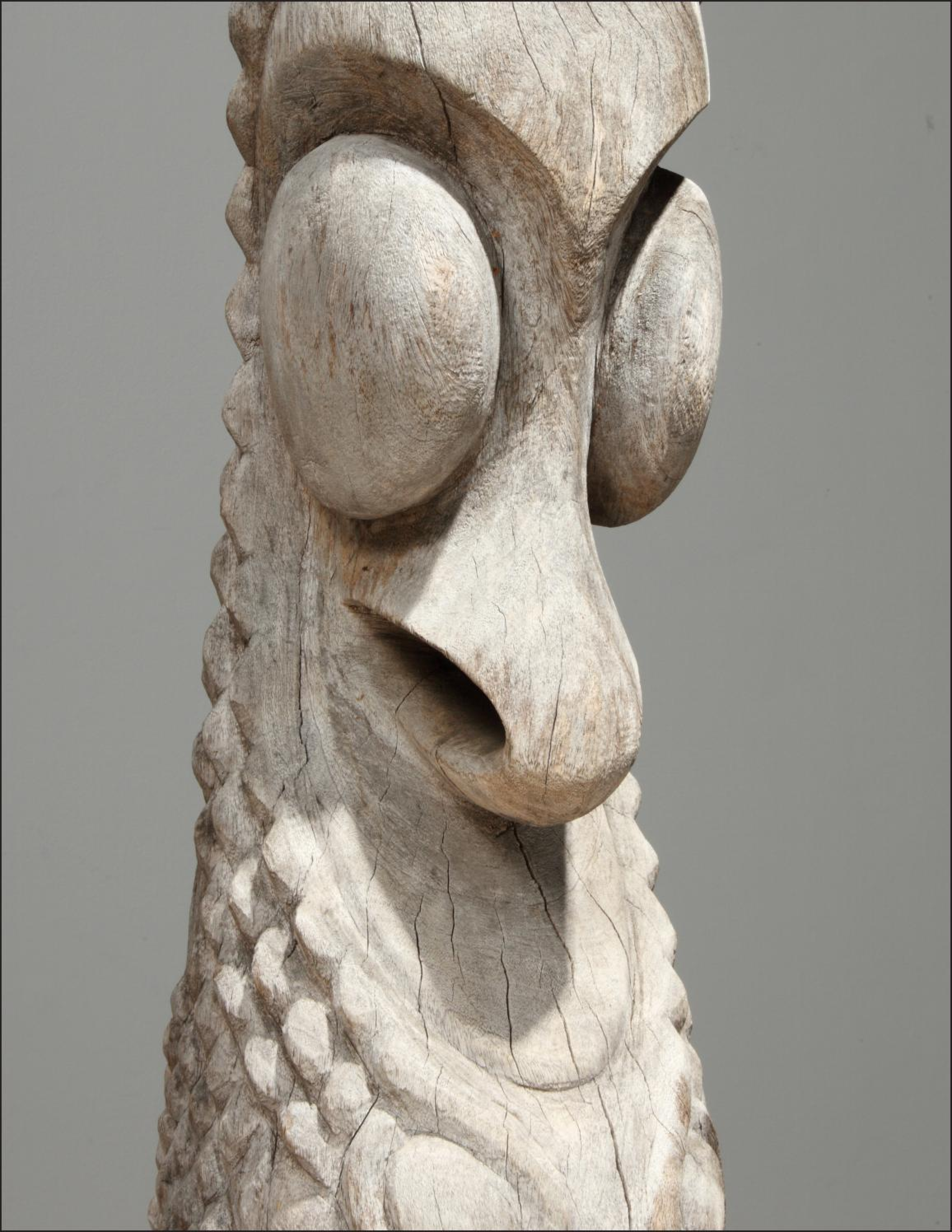
A distinctive feature of this drum are the carvings on the side. These designs relate to those in the Sand Drawings and Magic Stones for which North Ambrym is also famous.

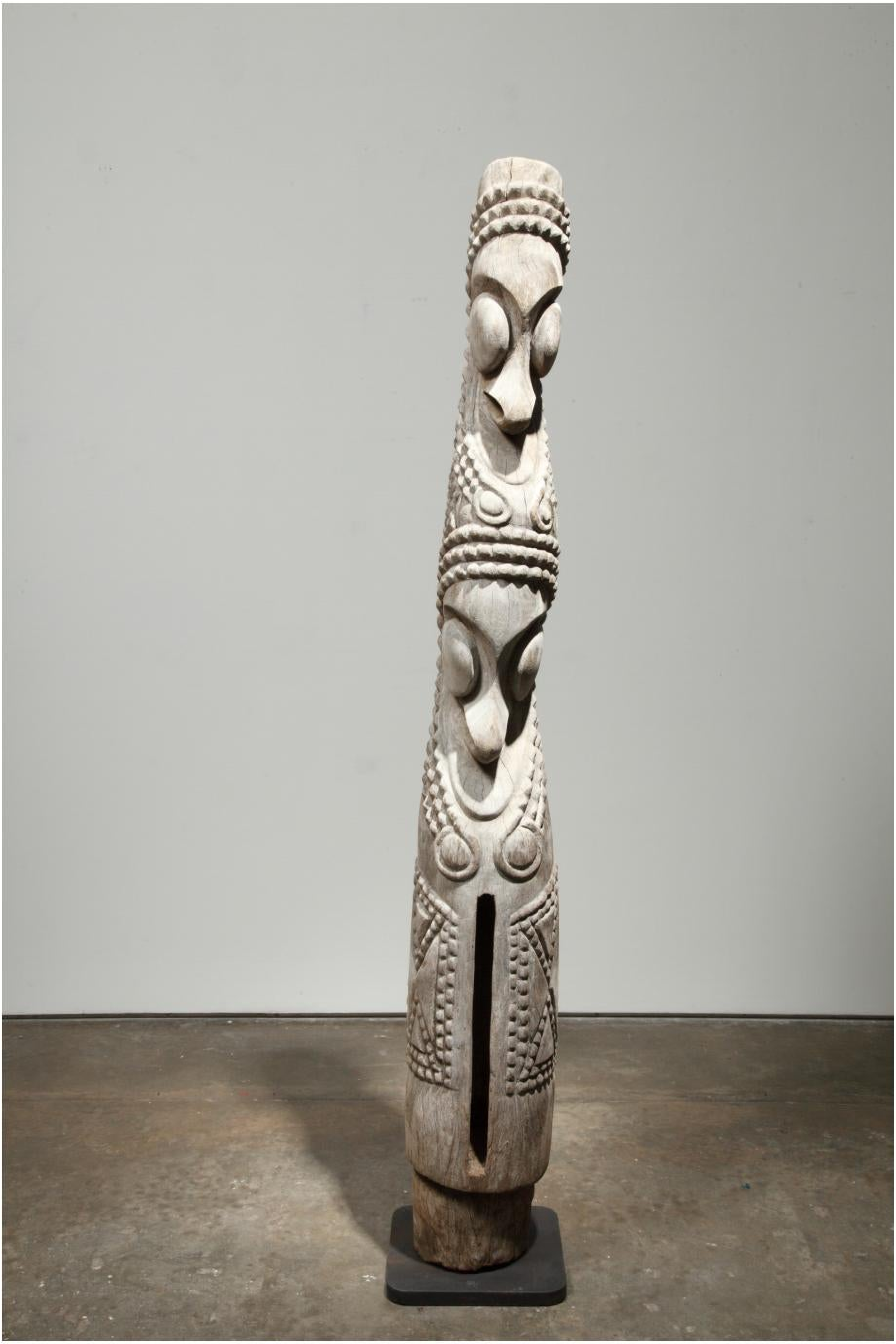
Tree fern statues of this type were produced for the ritual that accompanied an individual’s elevation to the rank of maghanehivir (from post-puberty to manhood). Collected soon after it was used, this particular figure retains portions of its original paint. The Fern tree figures are covered with a mixture of tree sap and charcoal before painting for ceremonial use. Afterwards these colors fade until the next time they are used and repainted.

VANUATU FERN TREE INITIATION FIGURE #2 | EARLY TO MID 20TH CENTURY

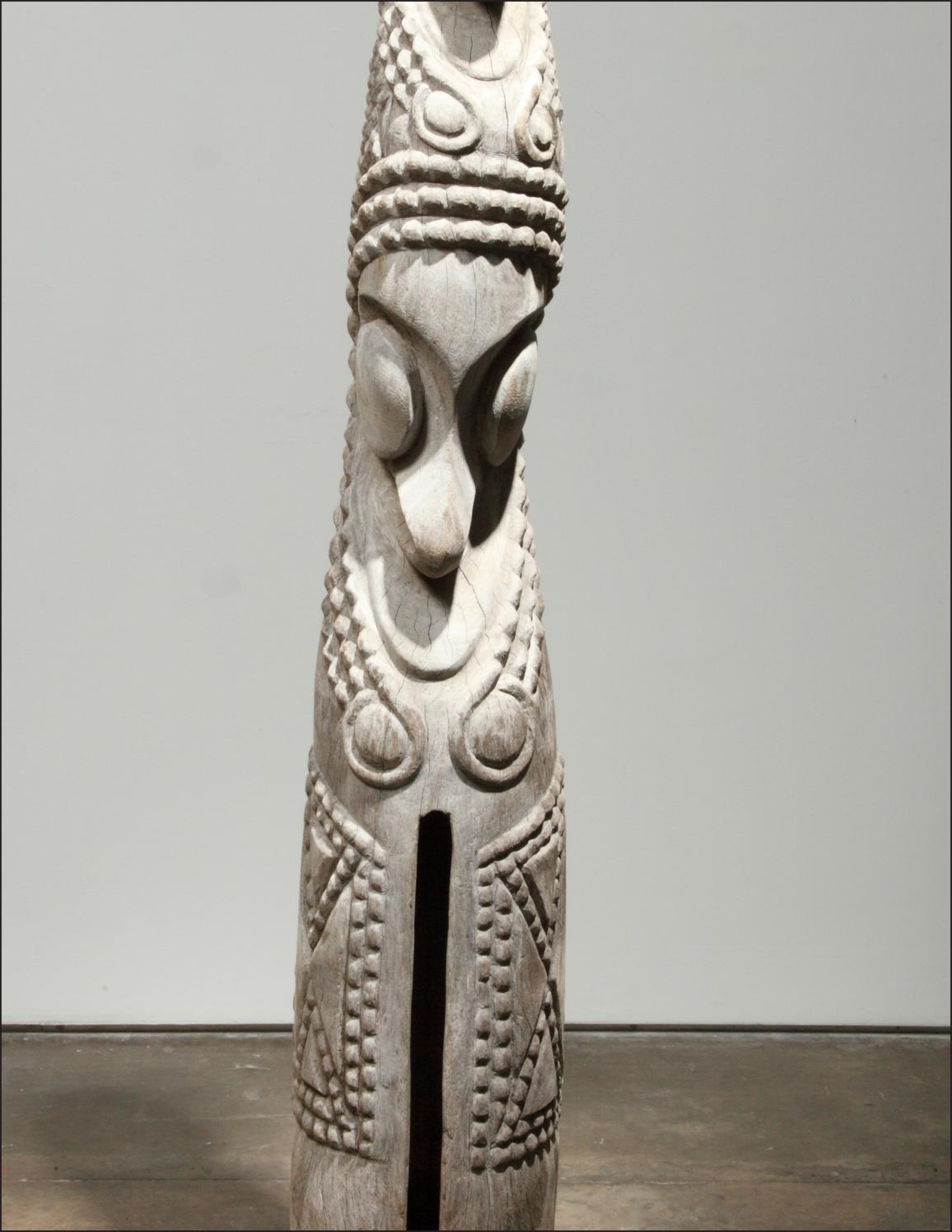
Carved Fern Tree Root | 120 x 20 x 15 Inches

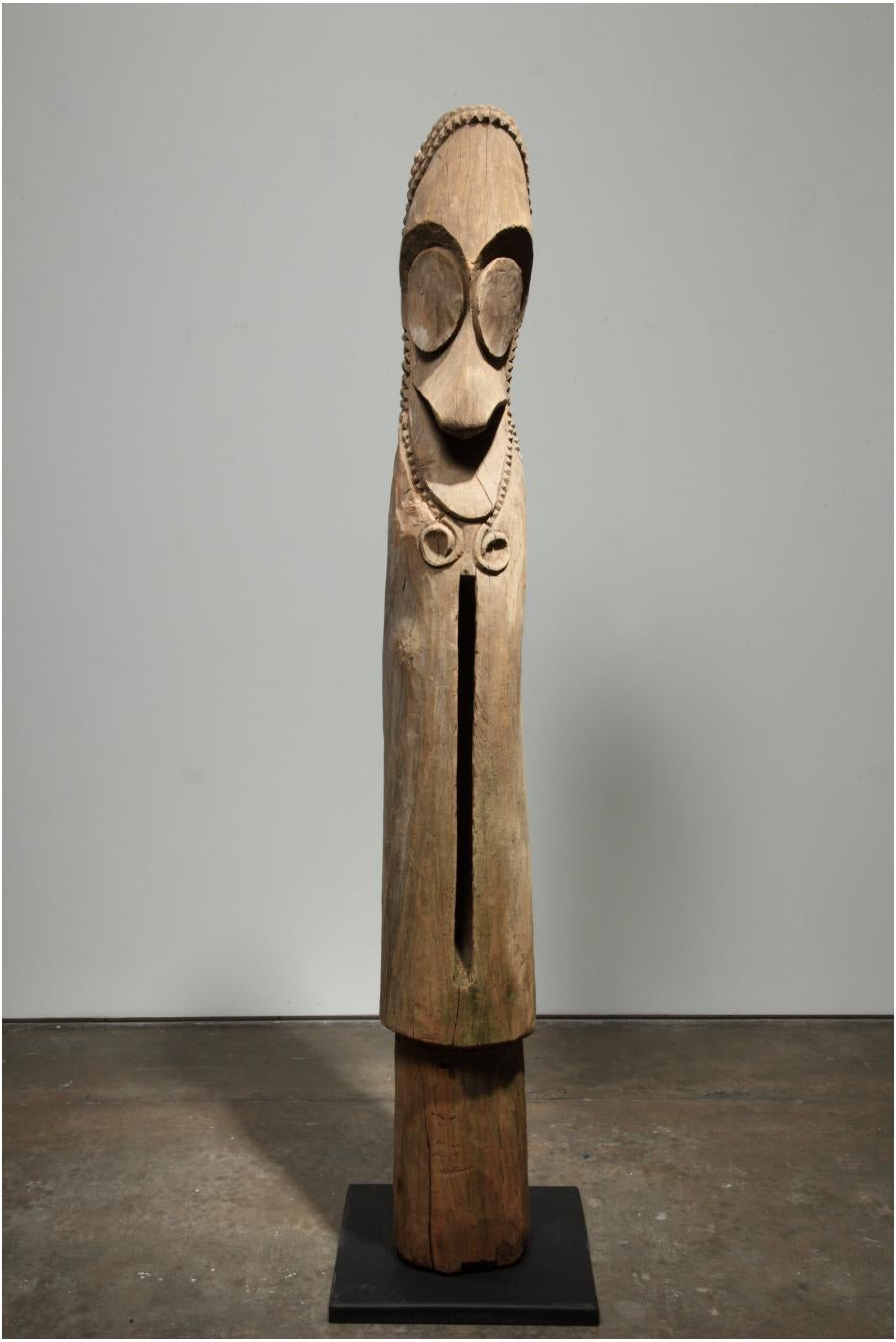






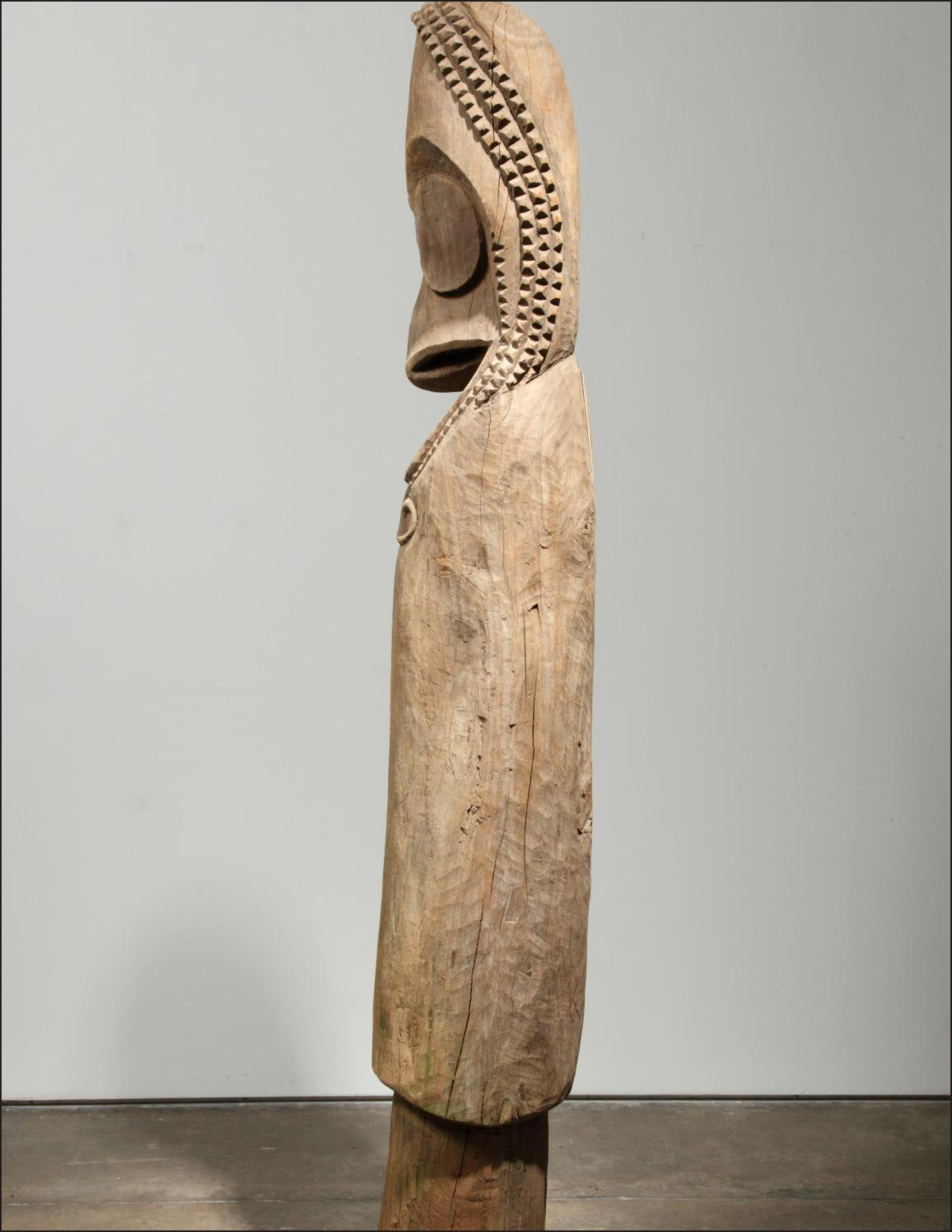
DOUBLE HEAD SLIT GONG DRUM | Carved Wood | 73 x 10 x 11 Inches





CHIEF TOFOR SLIT GONG DRUM | EARLY TO MID 20TH CENTURY

Carved Wood | 78 x 11 x 13 Inches



FERNTREE GRADE FIGURE VANUATU POLYNESIA

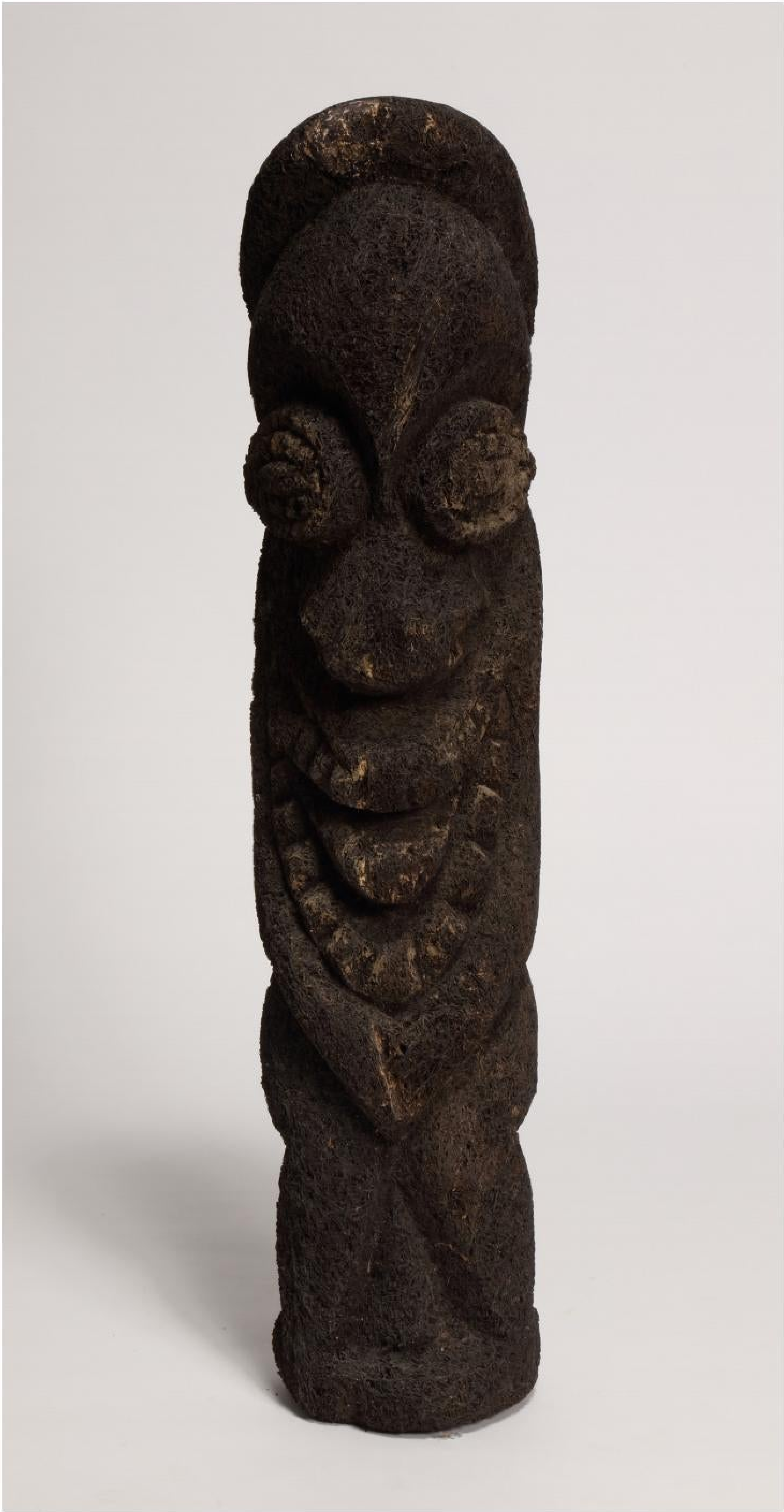
Small Fern Tree figures 1-3 were collected in the villages of Santino, Benger and Rammuh in North Ambrym in l990 by Caroline and Donald Yacoe.

Much of the art of central and northern Vanuatu in the southwest Pacific is associated with grade rituals, a hierarchical series of initiations, each of which confers successively greater religious and political authority during life and in the realm of the dead. In some areas, individuals who have reached the highest grades are considered the living dead, having already achieved the status of ancestors. Men's and women's grade rituals exist in most areas, but sculpture is created almost exclusively for men's grade rites.

This figure is carved from fern wood, the fibrous trunk of a tree fern composed of aerial roots surrounding a woody core. During the grade rites, grade figures are erected on the dancing ground and serve as temporary abode for the spirits associated with the grade. After the ceremony, the figure, its purpose served, is left on the dancing ground, its supernatural powers waning as it slowly disintegrates.

Tree fern statues of this type were produced for the ritual that accompanied an individual's elevation to the rank of maghanehivir (from post-puberty to manhood). Collected soon after it was used, this particular figure retains portions of its original paint. The Fern tree figures are covered with a mixture of tree sap and charcoal before painting for ceremonial use. Afterwards these colors fade until the next time they are used and repainted.

FERNTREE GRADE FIGURE #6 | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Carved Fern Tree | 84 x 12 x 15 Inches



Garamut drums are iconic musical instruments from the Sepik/Ramu river region. They are carved from a tree trunk hollowed out via the narrow slit along the top to create the resonating chamber. They are pounded with blunt sticks to create complex rhythms, which act as a communicative but codified language capable of transmitting information over many kilometers between villages to announce visitors, a person's death, and invitations to festivities or to issue warnings.

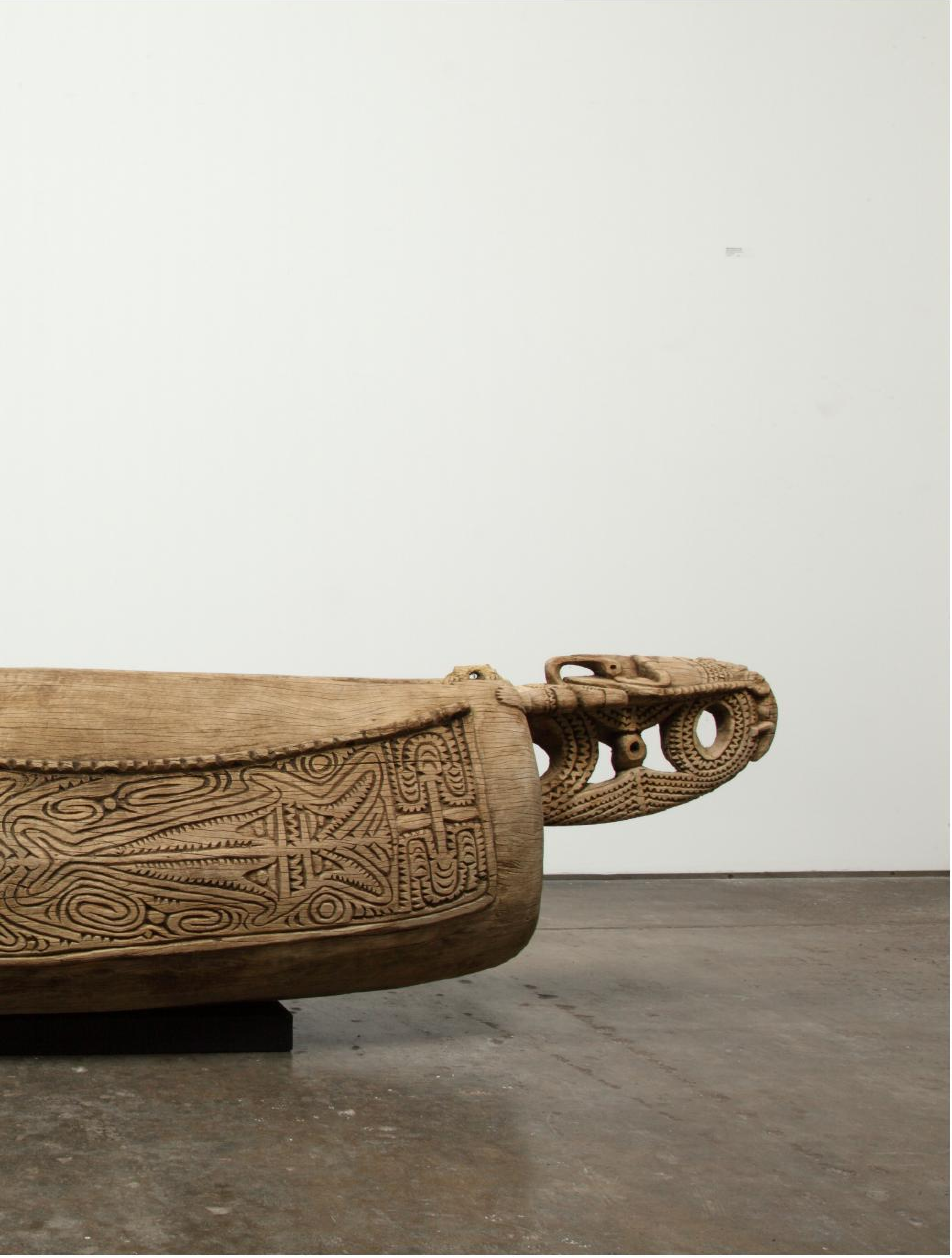
The deeply carved sides have a strong sense of precision in their bilateral symmetry and feature spirit faces, fish, frogs, human figures, and water currents. Each tableau is anchored by fish motifs that balance the design across the length of the drum.

At each end are handle-lugs that represent protective clan ancestors with the characteristic long, beak-like noses and conical headdresses of the lower Sepik/Ramu region. In a similar manner to masks and figures in this region, each drum is thought of as an individual named spirit being with a soul and personality.

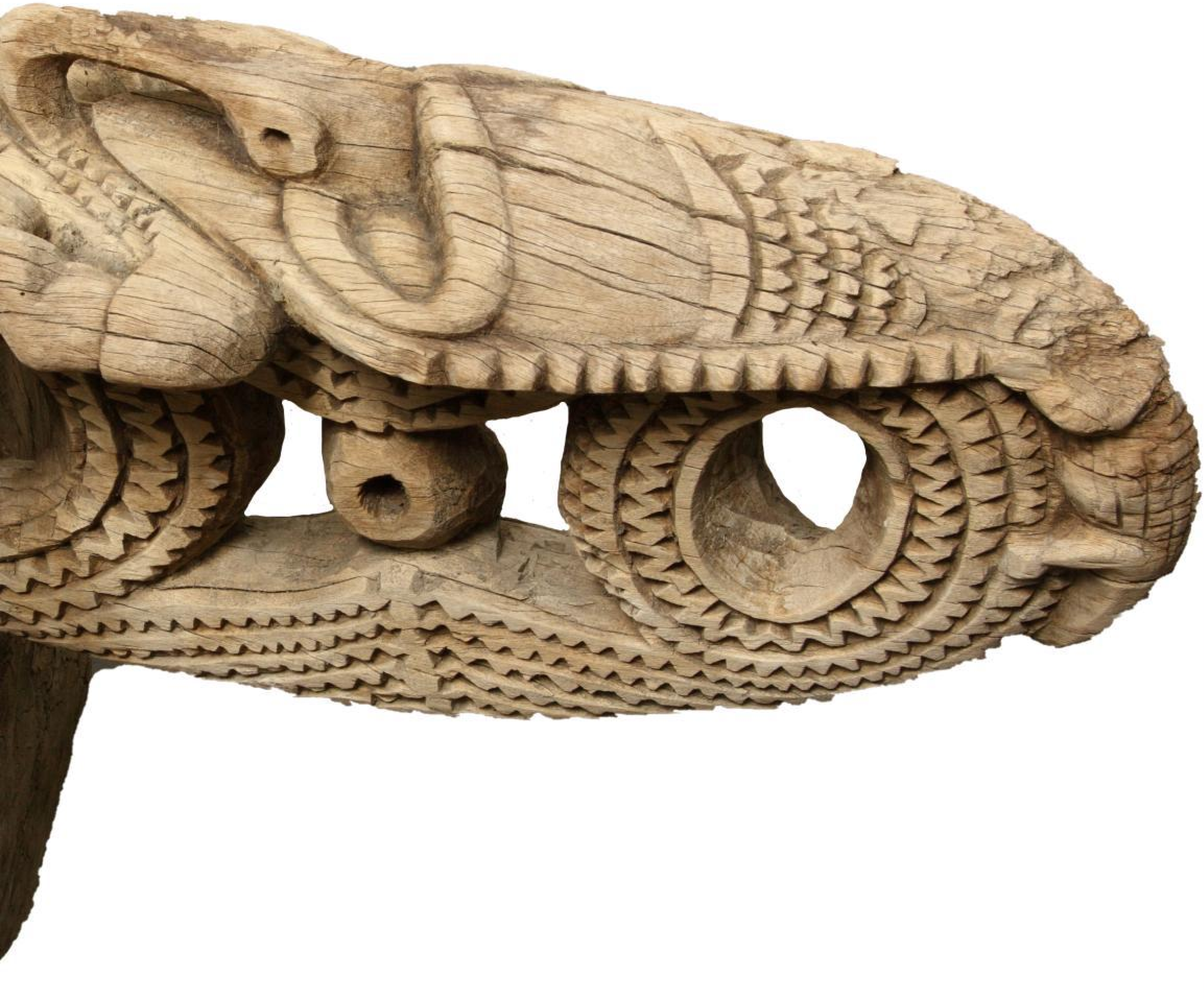
Men who make Garamut never make them for themselves; they are constructed for new brothers-in-law who have paid their bride price in full. Just as taking a wife is considered an aspect of reaching maturity as a man, the construction of the Garamut parallels the way boys are made into men. This highly sacred process is intrinsically linked to the spirituality of the village. Once crafted, slit drums are used on several occasions, but like their construction Garamut may only be played by initiated men.

They are most often used for ceremonial purposes. Because this drum comes from the Middle Sepik Region, it was almost certainly used for this purpose, likely even played alongside other slit drums. However, villages will also use their Garamut to communicate with each other from afar through a complex code of beats and rhythms. Very few Papuans fully master this code, but many can understand beats for their own name or commands like "hurry up!"

GARAMUT SLIT GONG DRUM



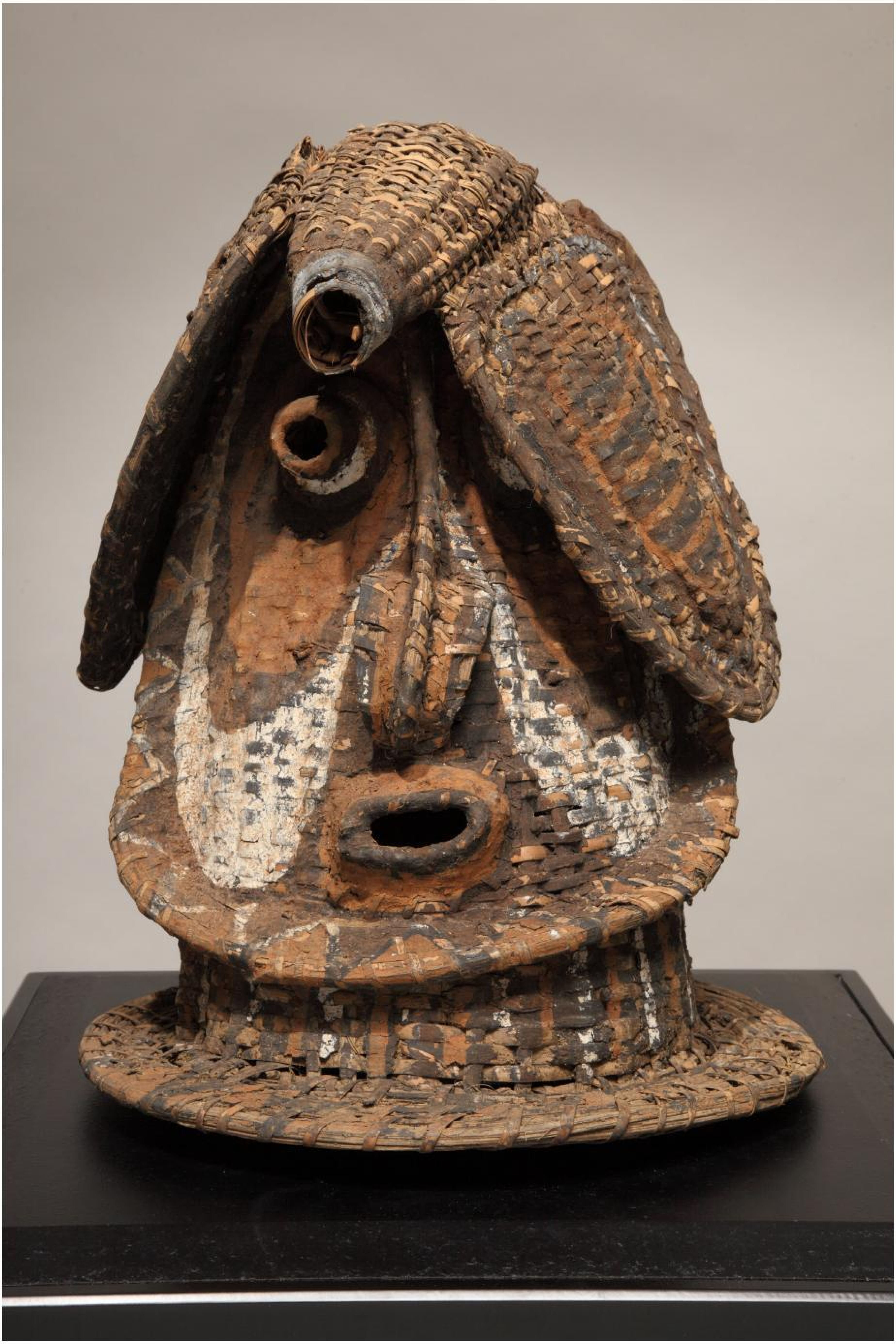
GARAMUT SLIT GONG DRUM #4 | CIRCA 20TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 24 x 91 x 16 Inches

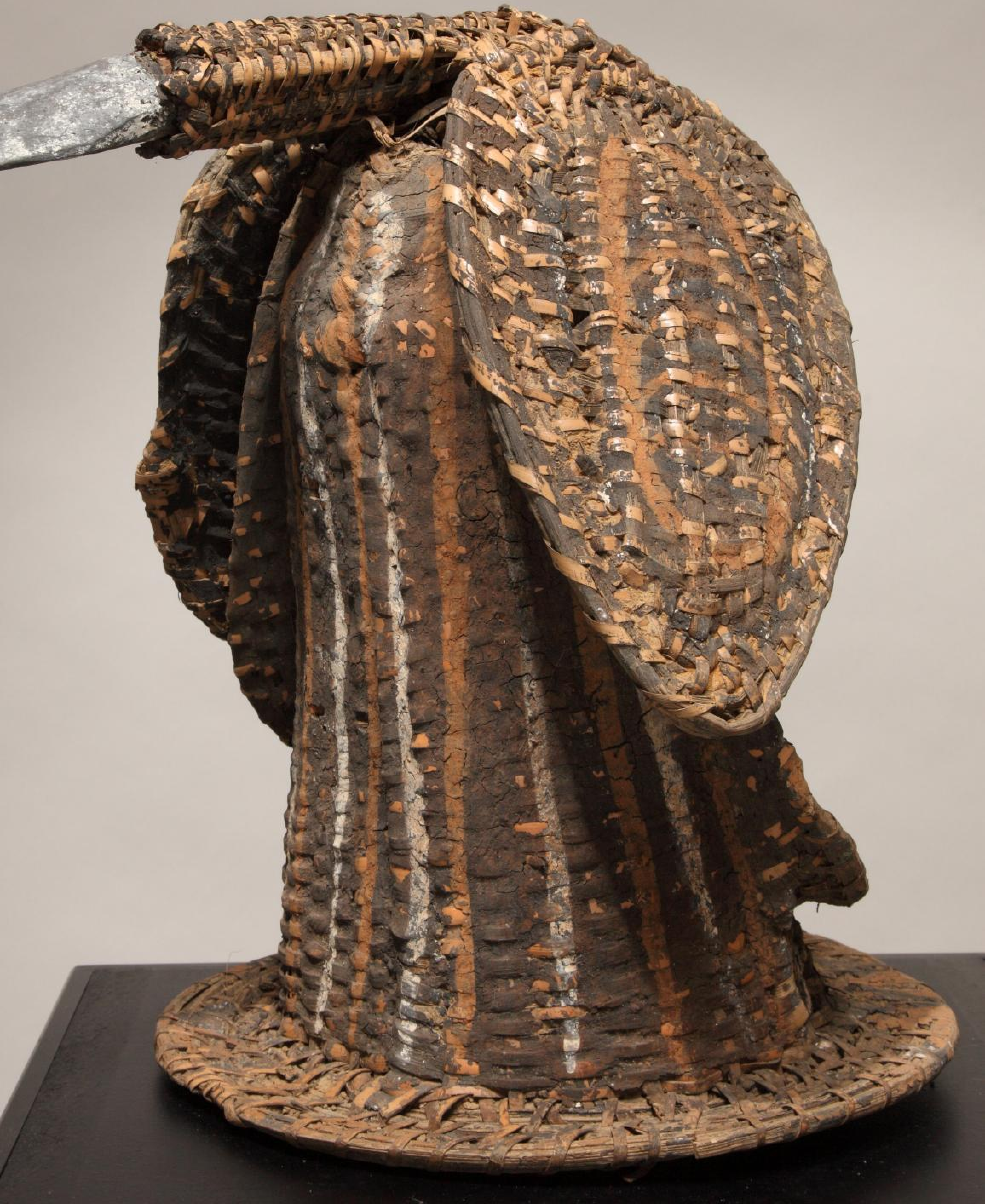


In the style of the Iatmul tribe. The Iatmul are a large ethnic group inhabiting some two-dozen politically autonomous villages along the middle Sepik River in Papua New Guinea. The communities are roughly grouped according to dialect of the Iatmül language as well as sociocultural affinities. The Iatmul are best known for their art, men's houses, male initiation, elaborate totemic systems, and a famous ritual called naven, first studied by Gregory Bateson in the 1930s. More recently, the Iatmul are known as a location for tourists and adventure travelers, and a prominent role in the 1988 documentary film Cannibal Tours.

The style of this mask represents the protective Mother Spirit of the village and would be found on a man's house. The bird on its head represents the collective fighting spirit of the men of the village.

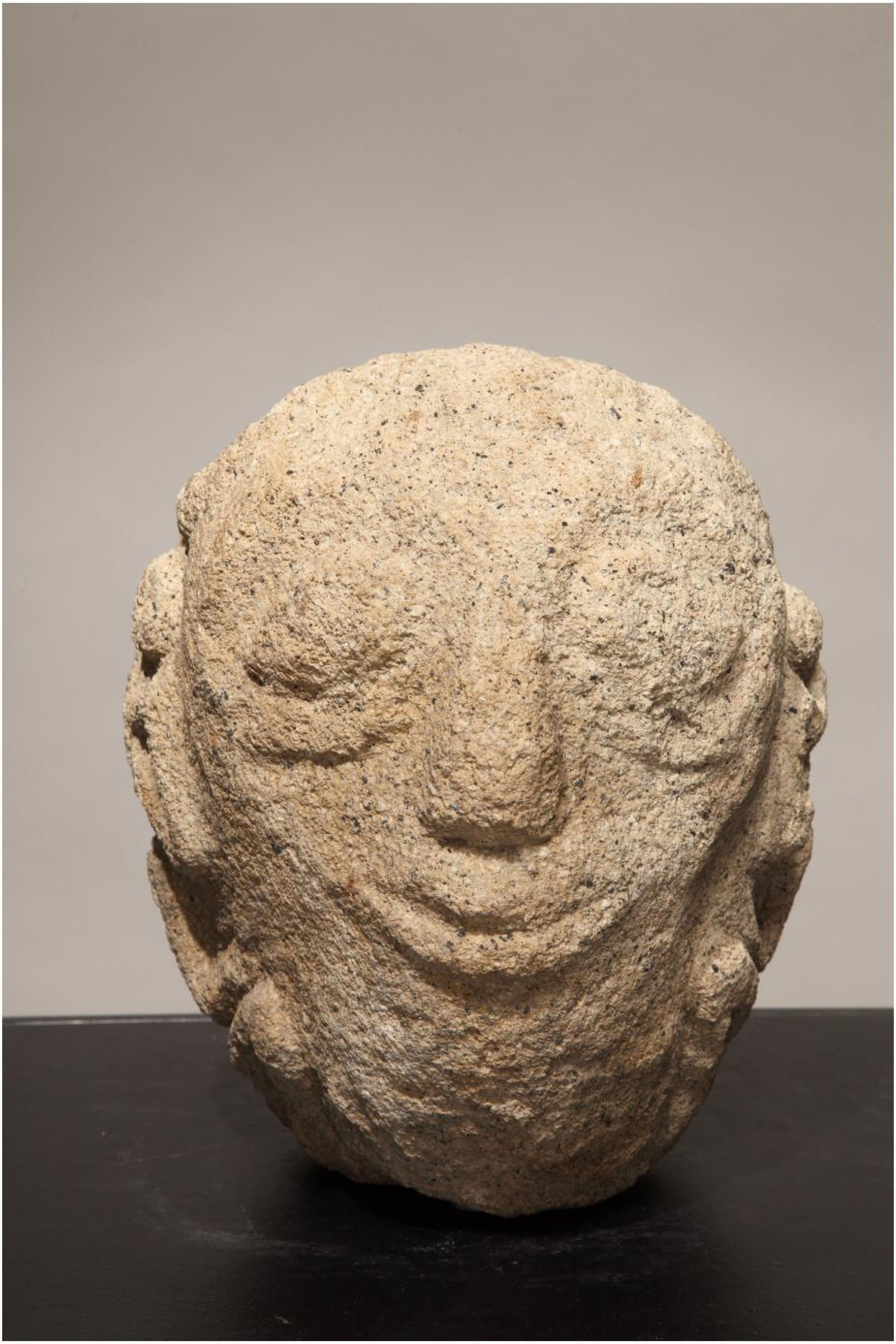
OCEANIC BASKET | **EARLY 20TH CENTURY** | Weave Mask, Mixed Media | 17 x 4 x 16 Inches

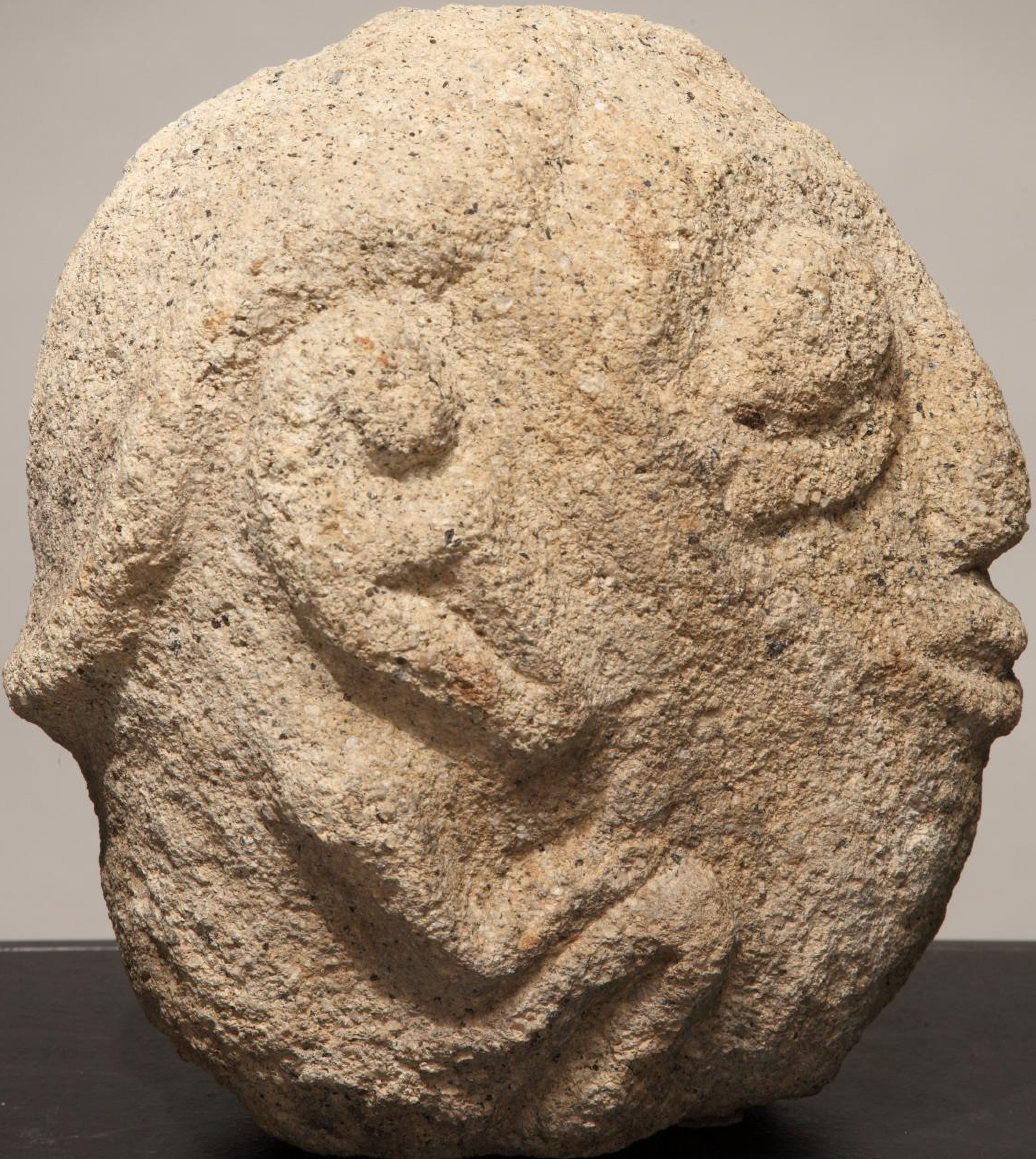


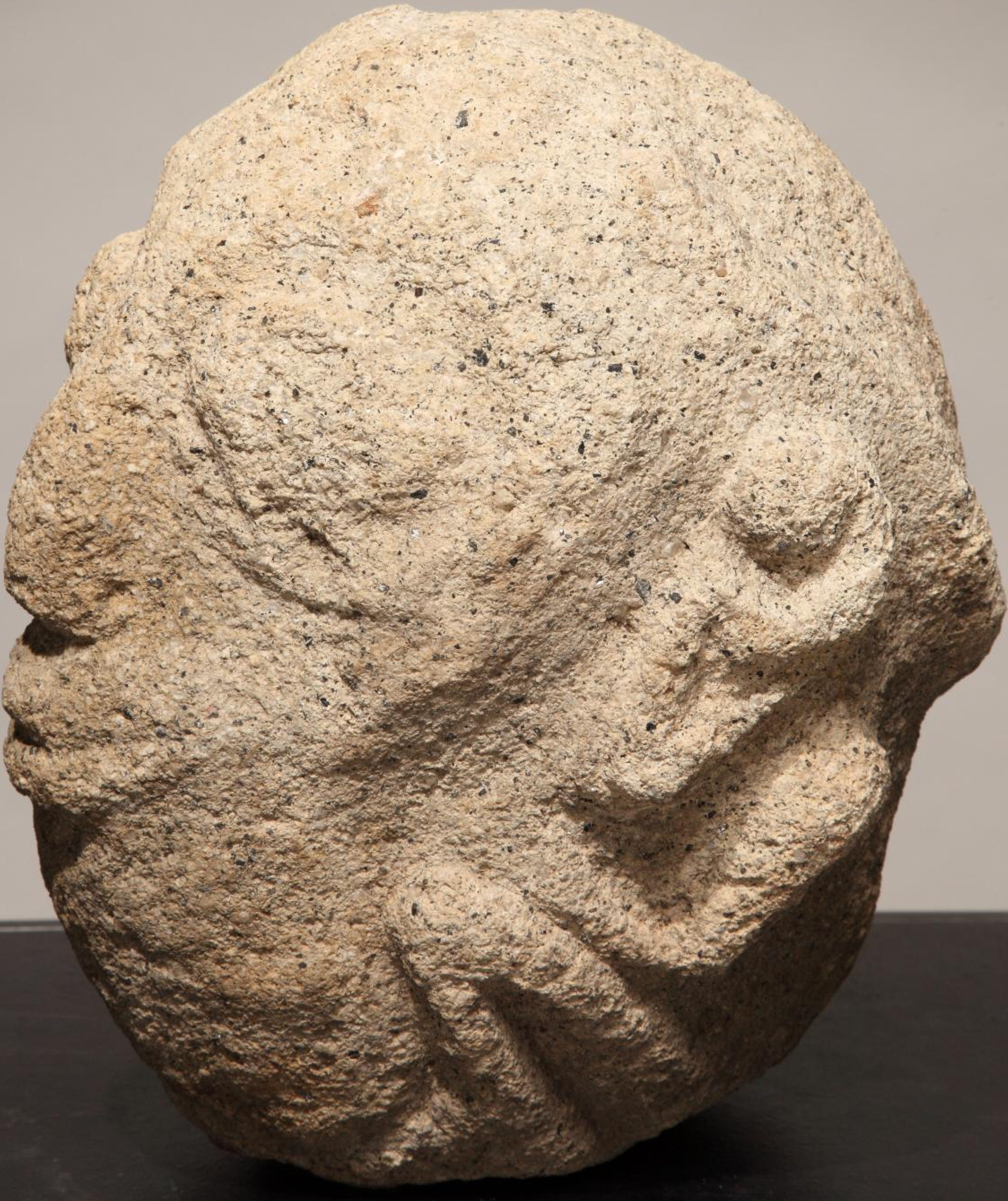


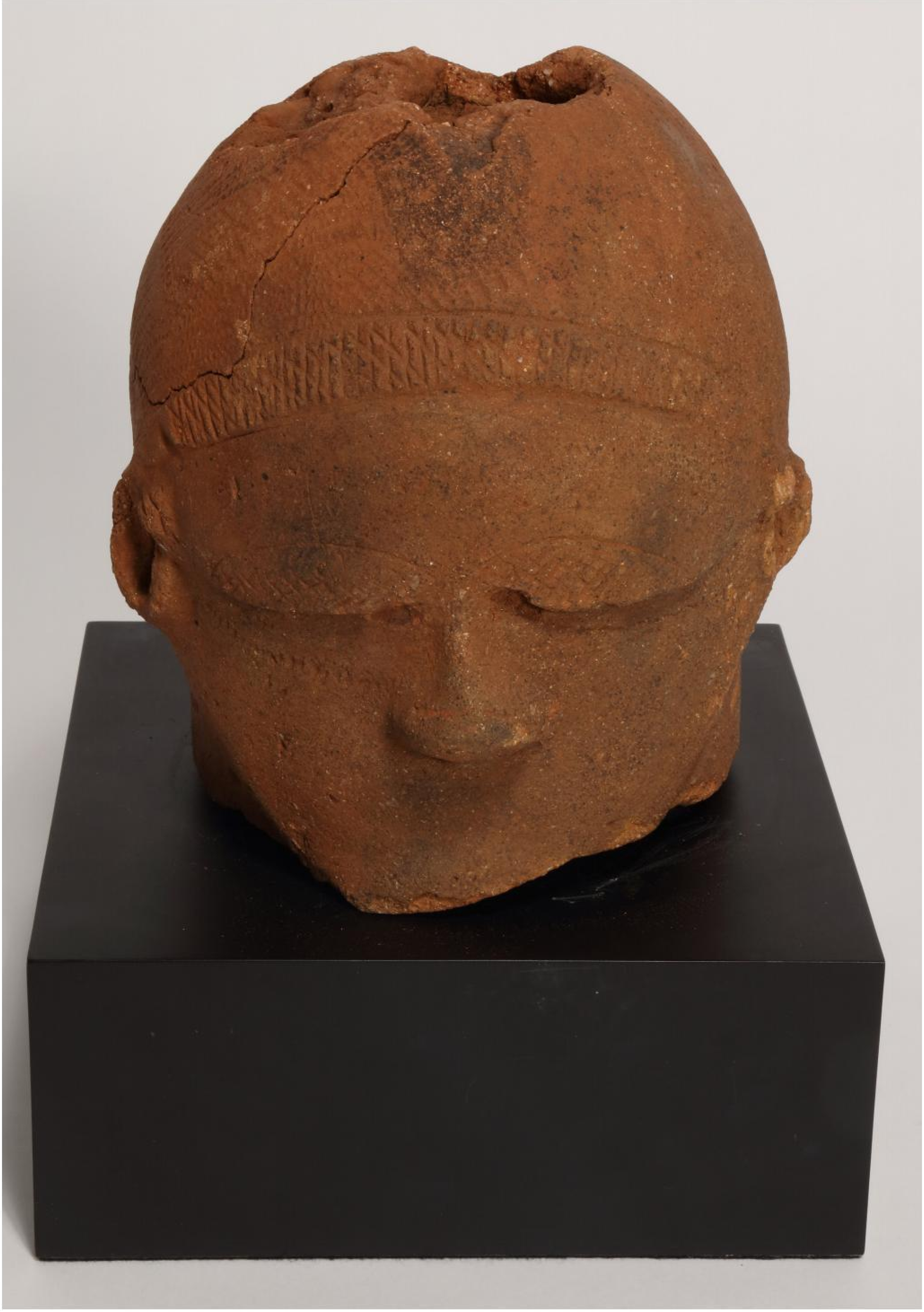
This Sumatran Stone Head is from Sulawesi, Indonesia which was acquired in mid-1970s. This is an original work by a Sulawesi carver which is meant to be a stylistically non-traditional one-off statement.

SUMATRAN STONE HEAD | CIRCA 19TH CENTURY | Carved Stone | 11 x 8 x 9 Inches





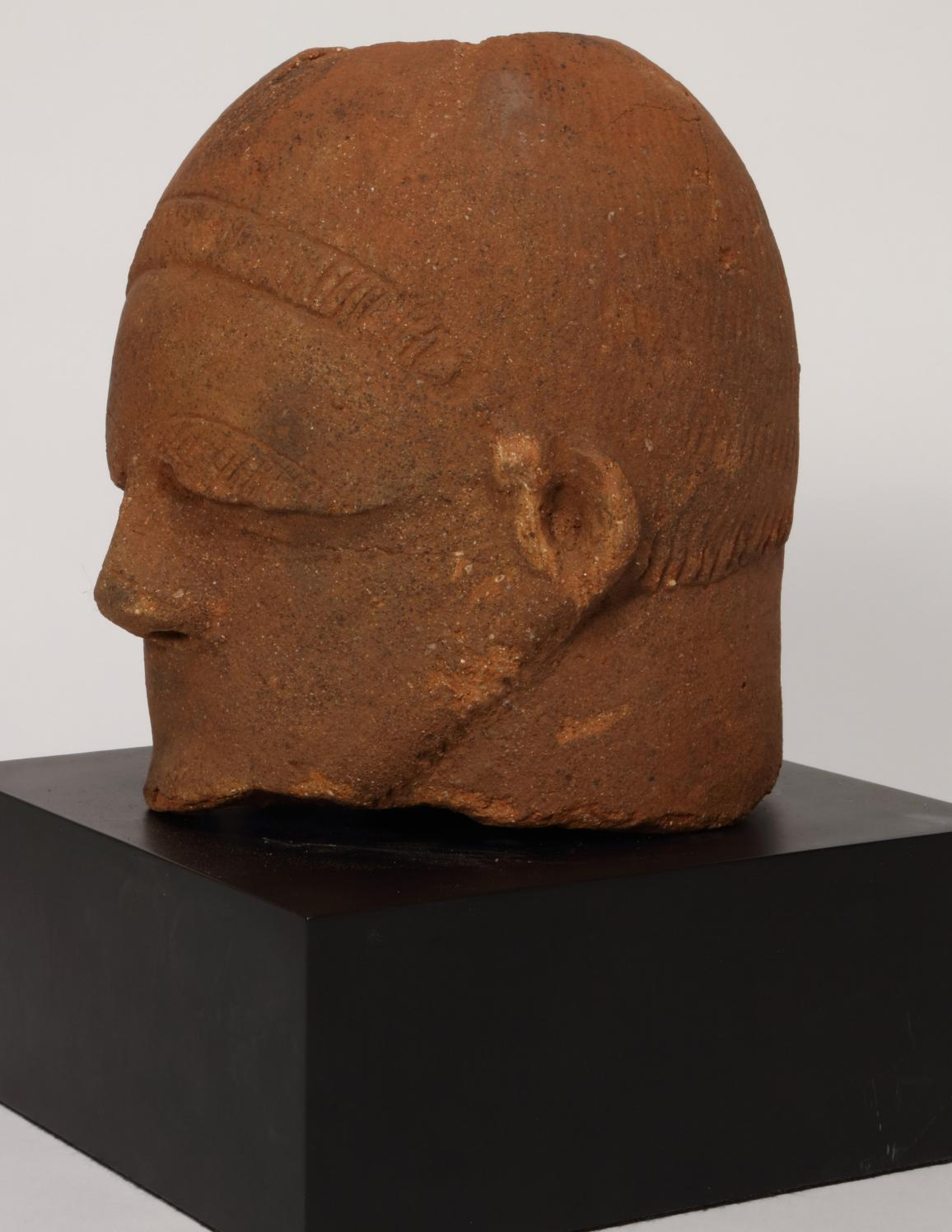


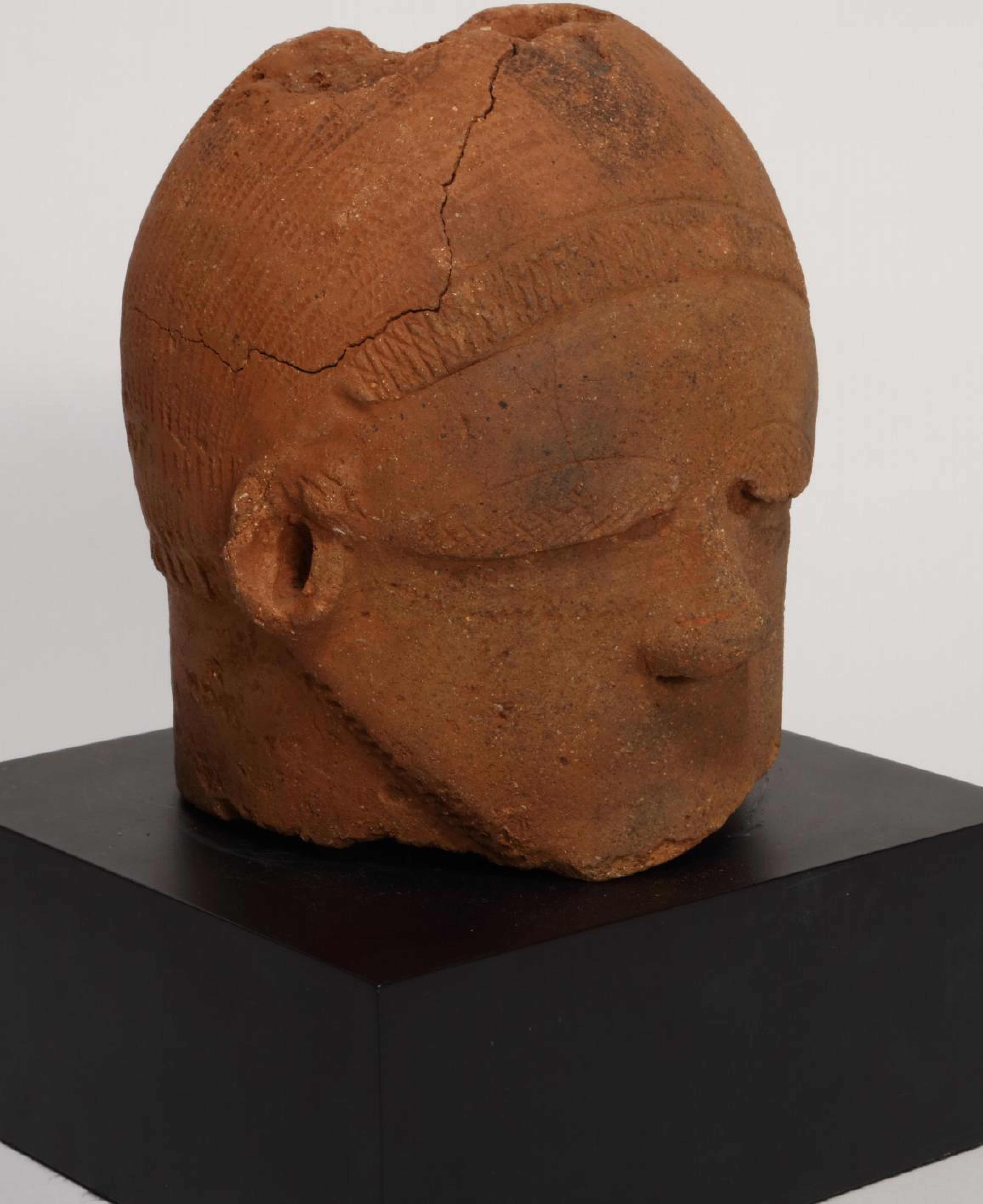


Nok refers to the culture associated with a one hundred square kilometer area in central Nigeria where thousands of terracotta figures were found. These figures were first encountered in tin mines by Colonel J. Dent Young in 1928 and were classified as Nok by Bernard Fagg in 1943. Dates associated with Nok were recently categorized into three periods: Early Nok beginning in the middle of the second millennium B.C.E., Middle Nok (900 to 300 B.C.E.), and Late Nok (1500 B.C.E. to the turn of the Common Era) (Franke and Breunig 2014). Nok figure sculptures are easily distinguishable by their large heads and facial features. Complete figurines range in size from 300 millimeters to one meter

One of the earliest African centers of ironworking and terracotta figure production, the Nok culture remains an enigma. This culture is believed to date back to roughly between 1000 BC and 200 AD. Masterful relics severed from their predecessors and successors by the passage of time, Nok terracottas currently occupy an important but isolated space in the history of African art.Most Nok sculpture is hollow and coil-built like pottery. Finely worked to a resilient consistency from local clays and gravel, the millennia-long endurance of these ancient objects is a testament to the technical ability of their makers

NOK HEAD | NOK TRIBE, 1000 BC - 300 AD | Terracotta | 9 X 8 X 8 Inches





SENUFO

COTE D'IVOIRE

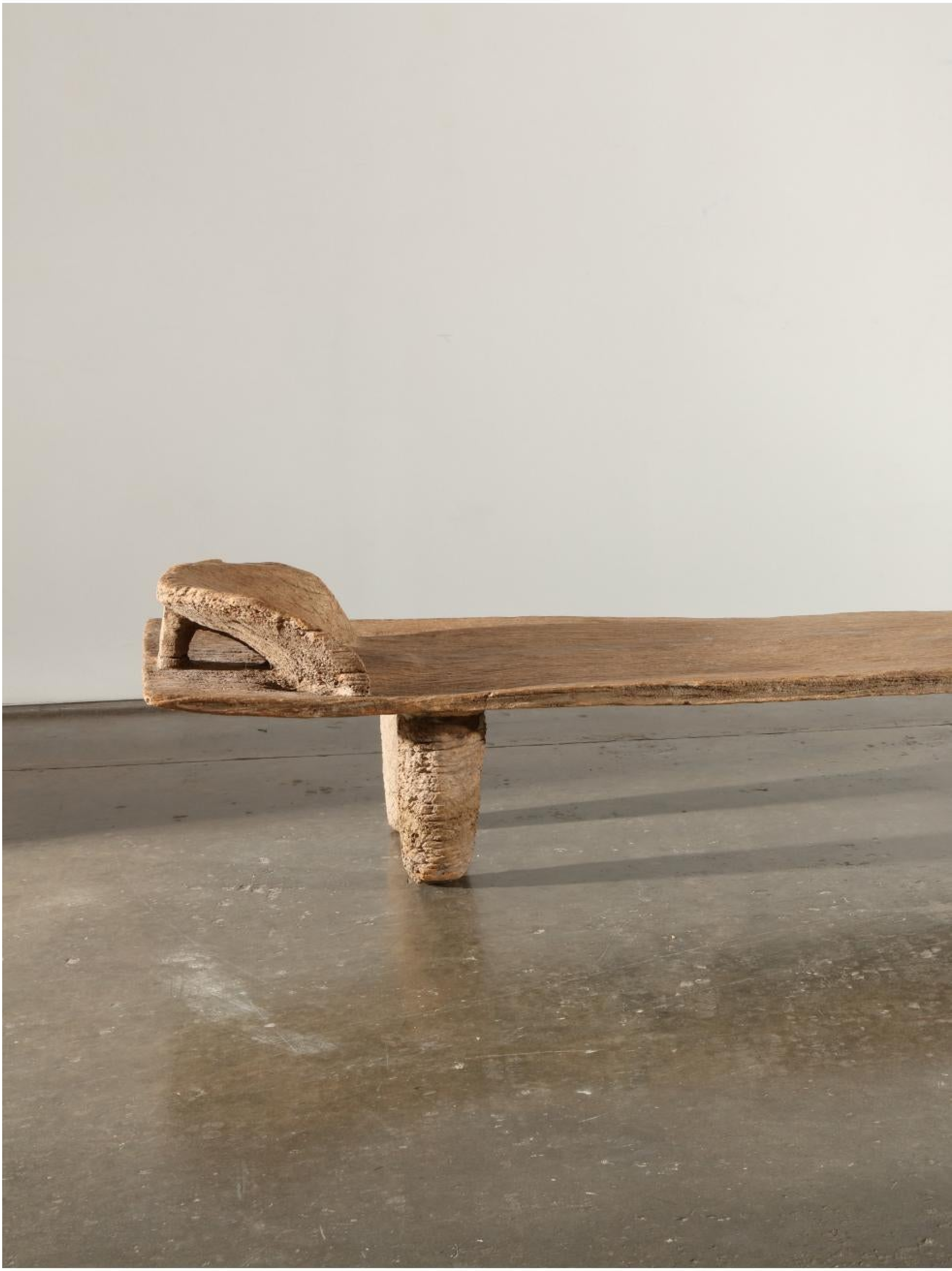
The word Senufo essentially means, “speaker of the language” and has been employed to describe the Senufo tribe since the French first infiltrated their lands. The term derives from the Malinke word “fo,” meaning “to speak” and the Senufo word “syeen,” meaning “person” and “speech.” Originally, the Senufo people were probably part of the cultural conglomerate that occupied lands over a millennium ago now associated with the Inland Niger River Delta.

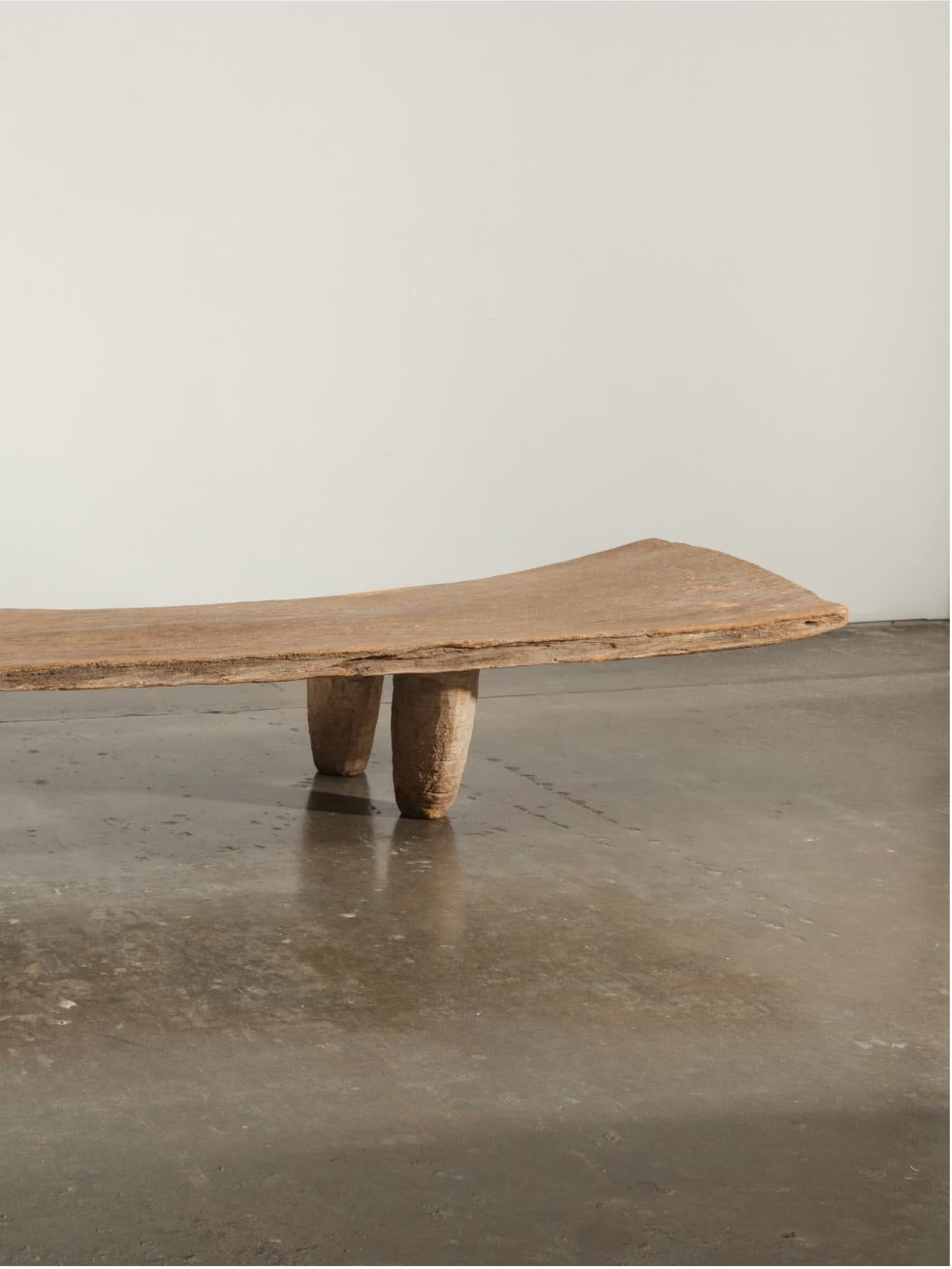
The Senufo are made up of a number of diverse subgroups who migrated into their current location from the north during the 15th and 16th centuries. Unlike their neighbors to the north they have remained relatively sheltered from intrusive cultures including the Songhai and Hausa. Although they have certainly borrowed knowledge from their neighbors, they have not had to fear constant attacks and social upheaval.

All Senufo art is made by specialized artisans, which may diminish regional stylistic differences. Figures representing the ancestors are common, as are brass miniatures and small statues, which are used in divination. There are several types of masks used by the Poro society.

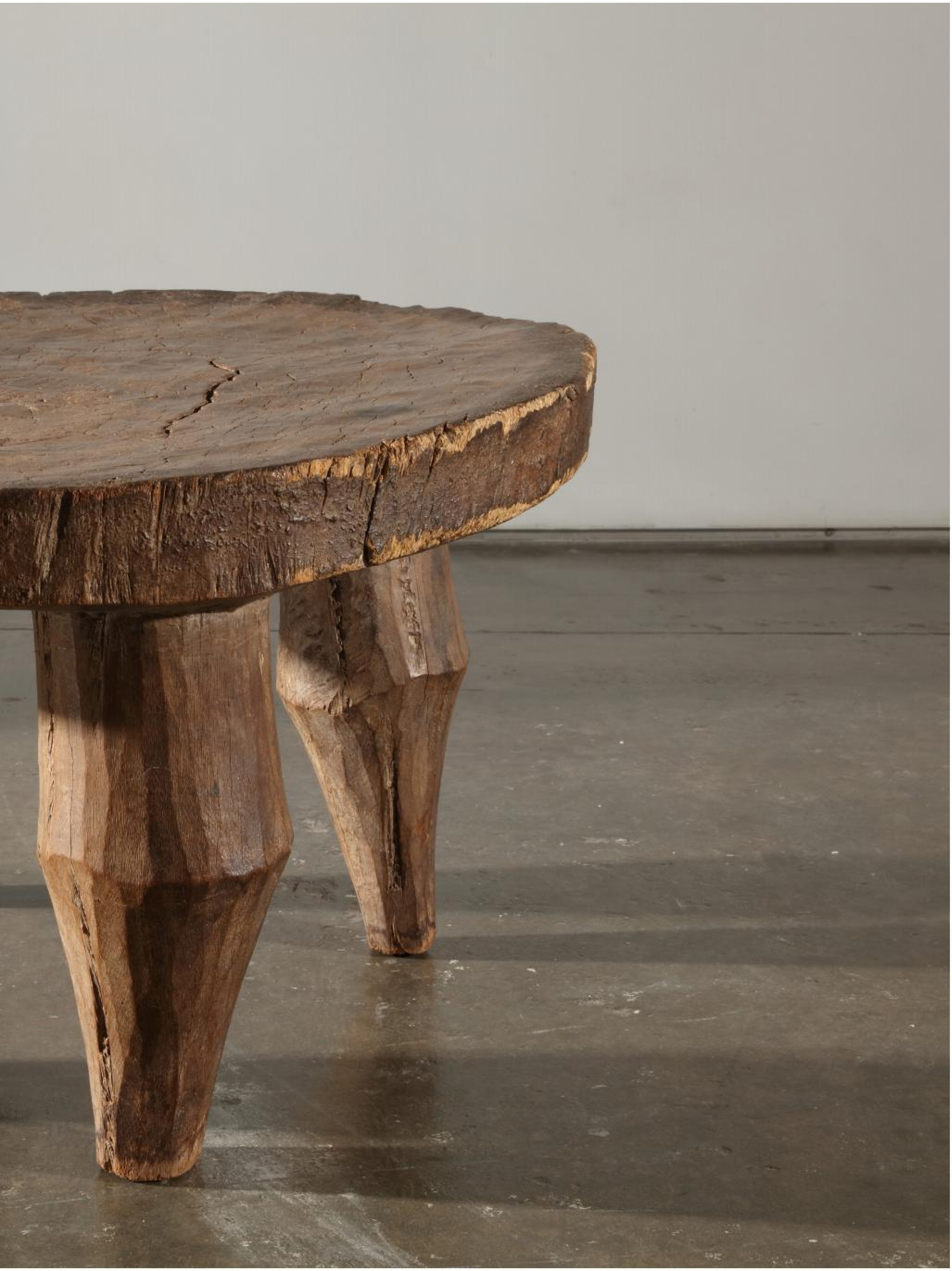
Senufo agriculture is typical of the region, including millet, sorghum, maize, rice, and yams. They also grow bananas, manioc, and a host of other crops that have been borrowed from cultures throughout the world. Small farm animals such as sheep, goats, chickens, guinea fowl, and dogs are raised. Minimal amounts of hunting and fishing also contribute to the local economy.

Senufo towns can range in size from about 50 up to 2,000 inhabitants. They are divided along ethnic lines which are tied to a particular matrilineage. These katioula (divisions) reflect the economic and social status of each lineage within the community and include Fo no (farmers), Kule (blacksmiths), Kpeene (carvers), or Tyeli (brass casters responsible for making divination ornaments), or leather workers. There are four societies which educate and govern the actions of individuals. They are Poro, Sandogo, Wambele (“the sorcerers’ society”), and Tyekpa, which is found only among the Fodonon.

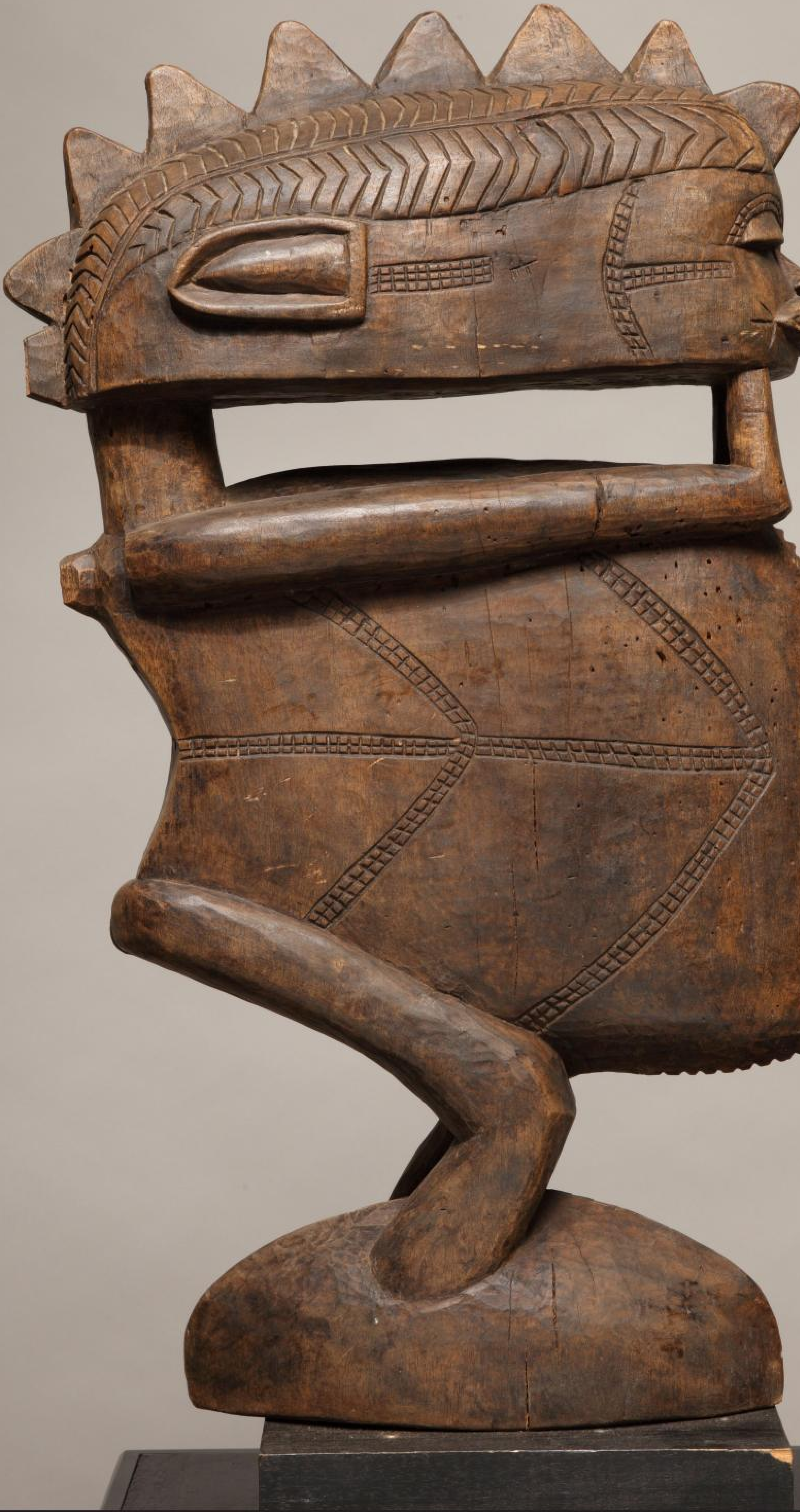


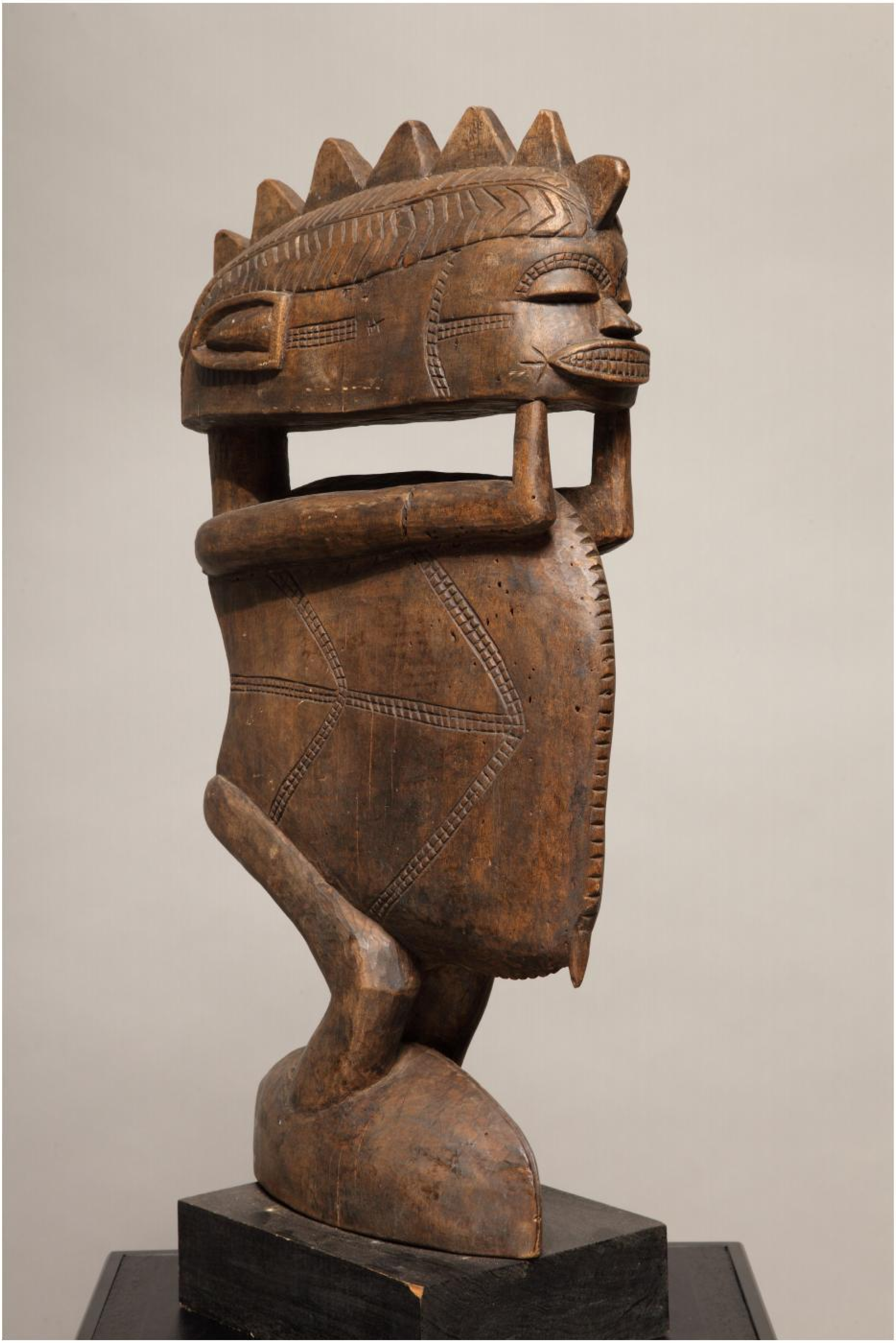


SENUFO BED (COTE D'IVOIRE) | Carved Wood | 15 x 111 x 27 Inches

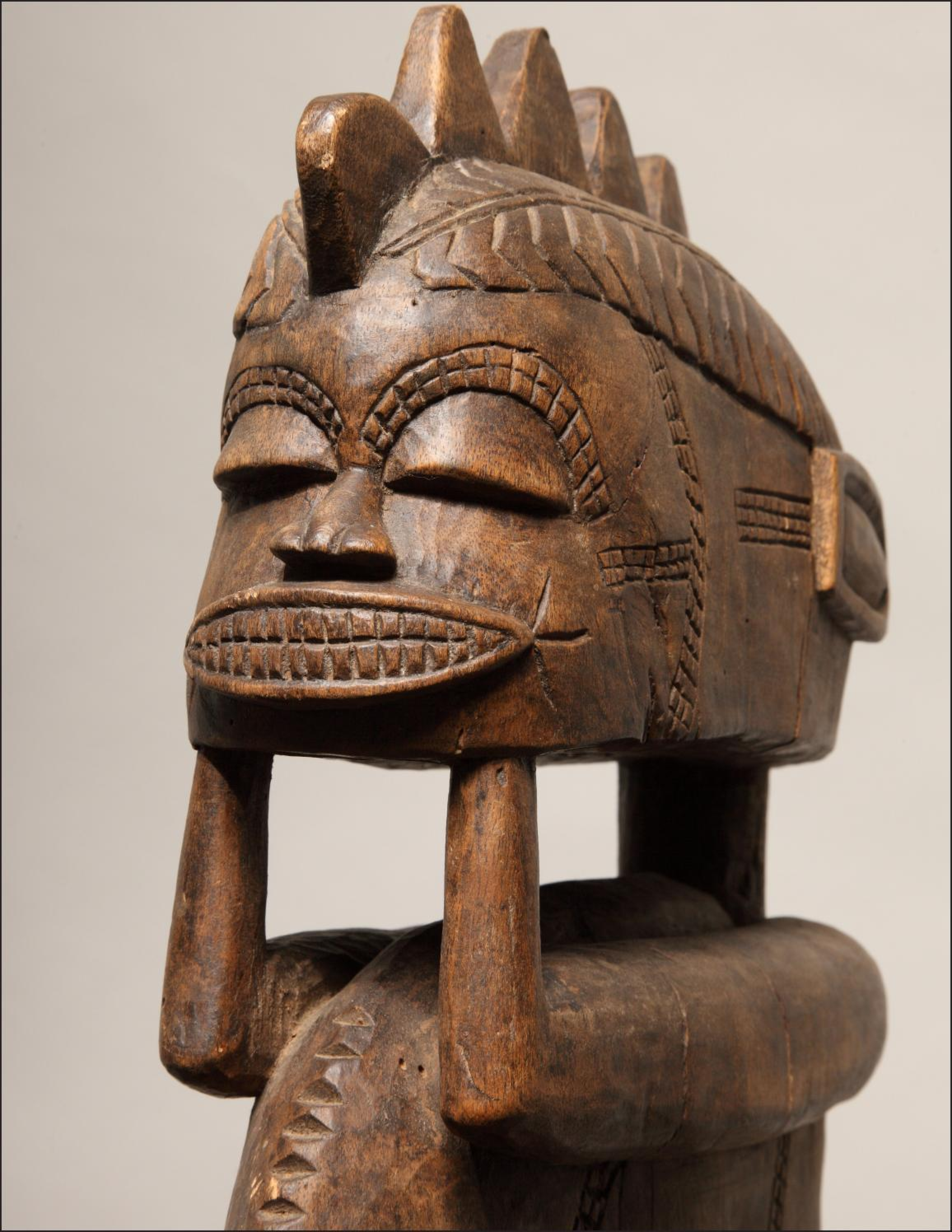


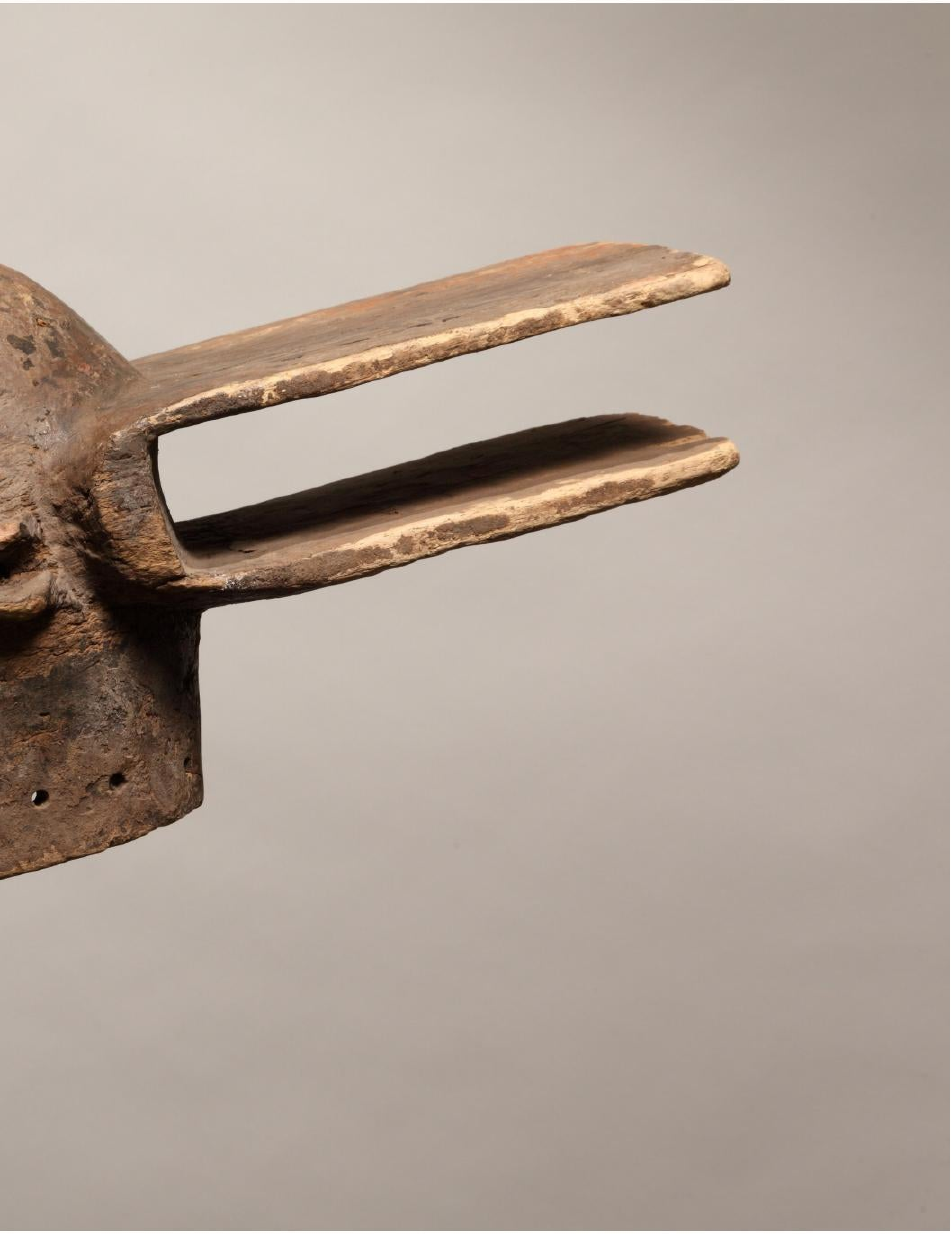
SENUFO TABLE (COTE D'IVOIRE) | Carved Wood | 26 x 26 x 16 Inches





SENOFU SCULPTURE | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 28 x 7 x 16 Inches



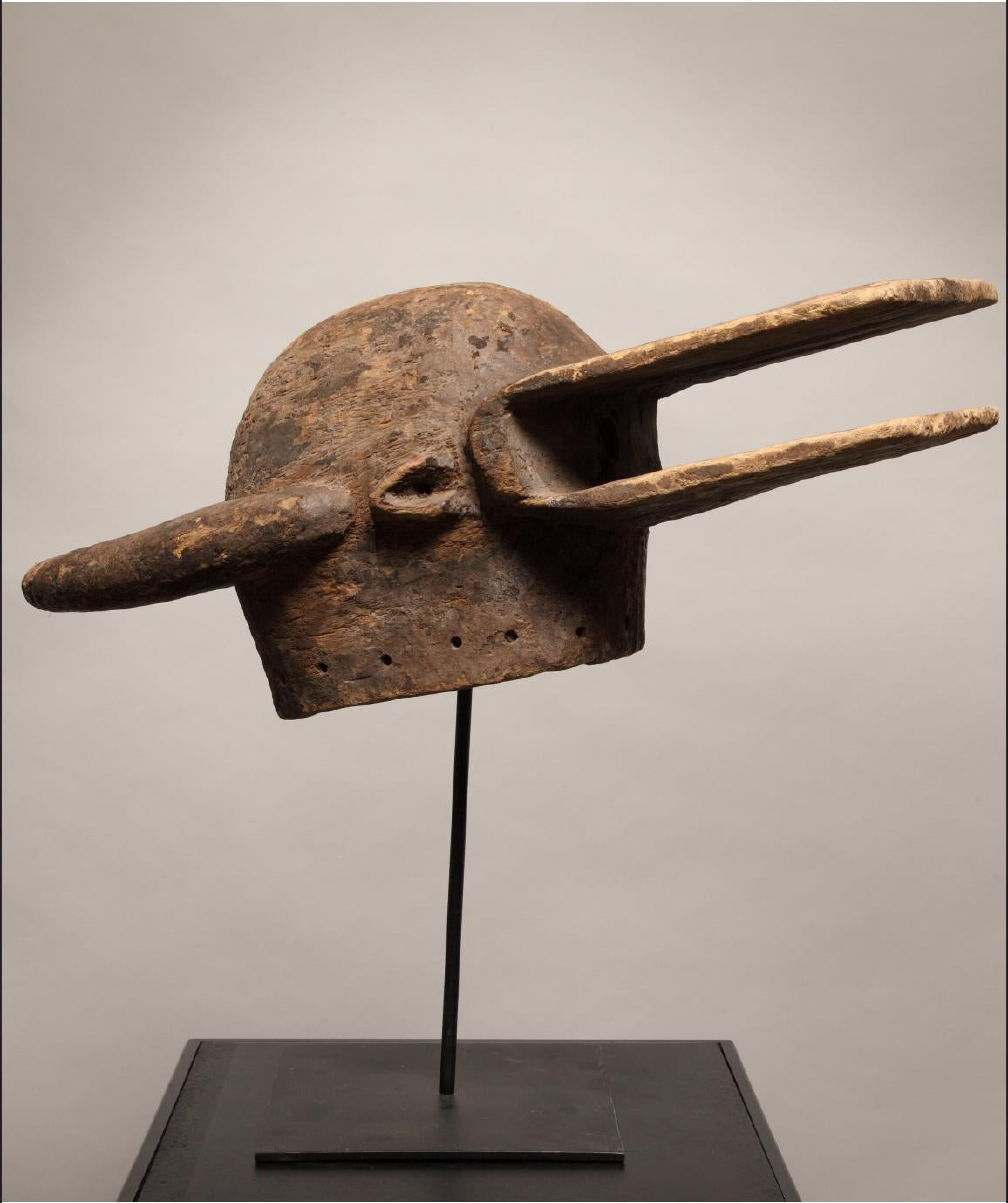


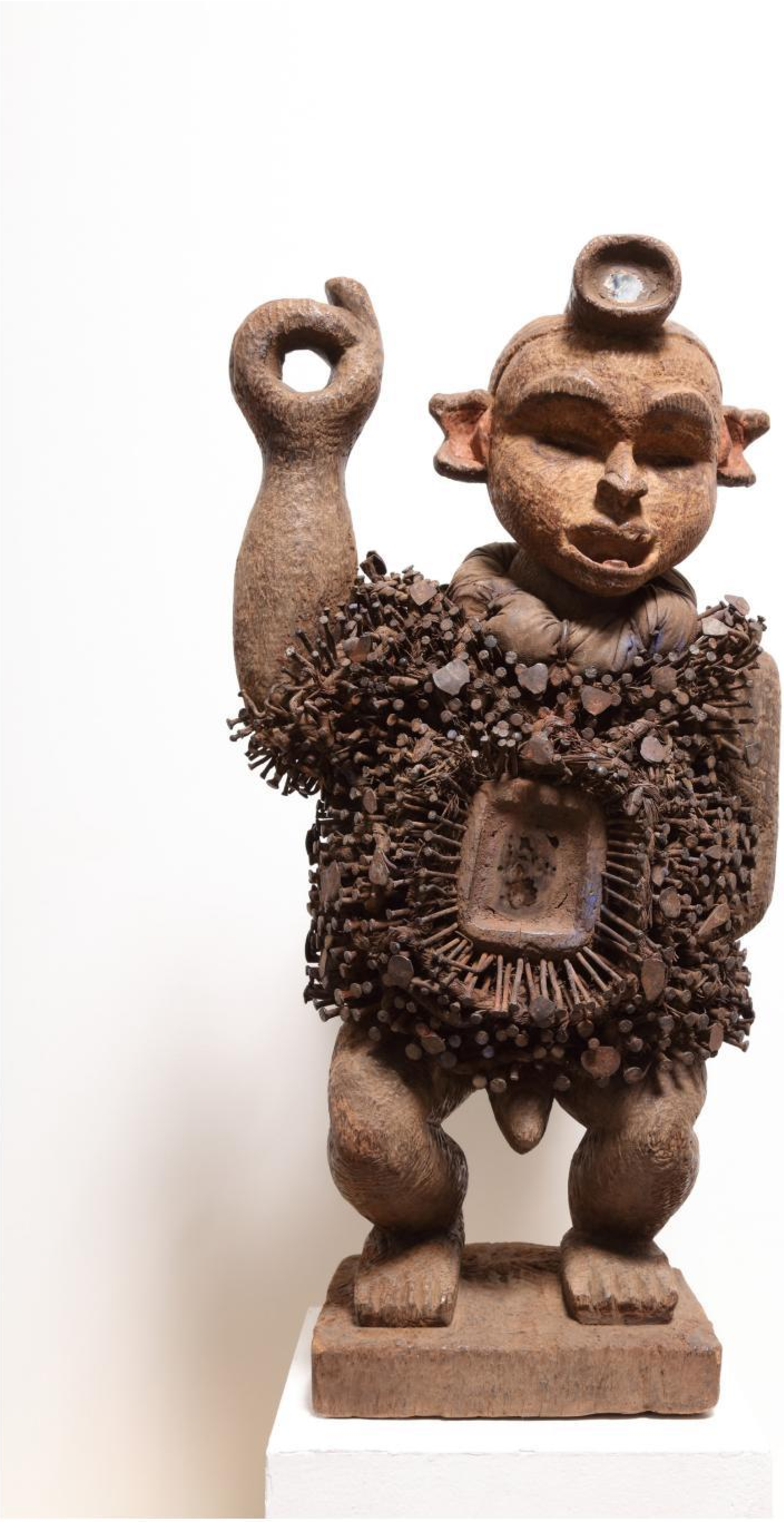
SENOFU FIREMAN HELMET MASK | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 12 x 16 x 30 Inches

Senufo helmet masks which include elaborate assemblages of antelope horns, bush-pig tusks, rows of enormous sharp teeth, and the figures of birds and chameleons are called kponyungo or “funeral head mask”. Helmet masks are the senior and most dangerous of the masquerades used by the Senufo Poro society. “They are the embodiment of supernatural powers and knowledge of magical formulae, expressed through aggressive forms and symbols.

These powers are augmented by age and validated by the accretion of magical substances and blood sacrifices to the ancestors and the bush spirits. The masquerade incarnates powers that may be directed against lawbreakers and sorcerers and against negative spirit forces, such as witches, wandering dead, and malevolent bush spirits”.

The mask performer plays a double-membrane barrel drum and wears a costume that consists of a one-piece suit dyed deep red with painted figurative and geometric patterns. Because the costume is not attached to the mask, holes are not pierced around the base or neck of the mask. The performer is able to see out through the open jaws.





KONGO NAIL FETISH | CIRCA 1900 | Nails Cloth and Stone | 30 x 14 x 16 Inches

Certainly the most dramatic of the magical figures produced across the Southern Savannah are the nkisi nkonde (pl. minkinsi minkonde) figures that are usually called “nail fetishes” in the popular literature on African art. Most frequently, these consist of anthropomorphic figures with one arm raised holding a weapon (often missing), balanced on the toes, leaning forward in an aggressive pose ready to strike.

These magical figures are given a specific power by the addition of medicinal/magical ingredients by an nganga, a ritual specialist or pharmacist who acts on behalf of his client. The powers of the nkisi nkonde may be positive or negative: they may act as agents of healing, justice, revenge, and oath-taking. To seal a contract, bind an oath, or finalize a treaty blades may be driven part-way into the figure by both parties involved and wrapped with raffia twine to bind the agreement.

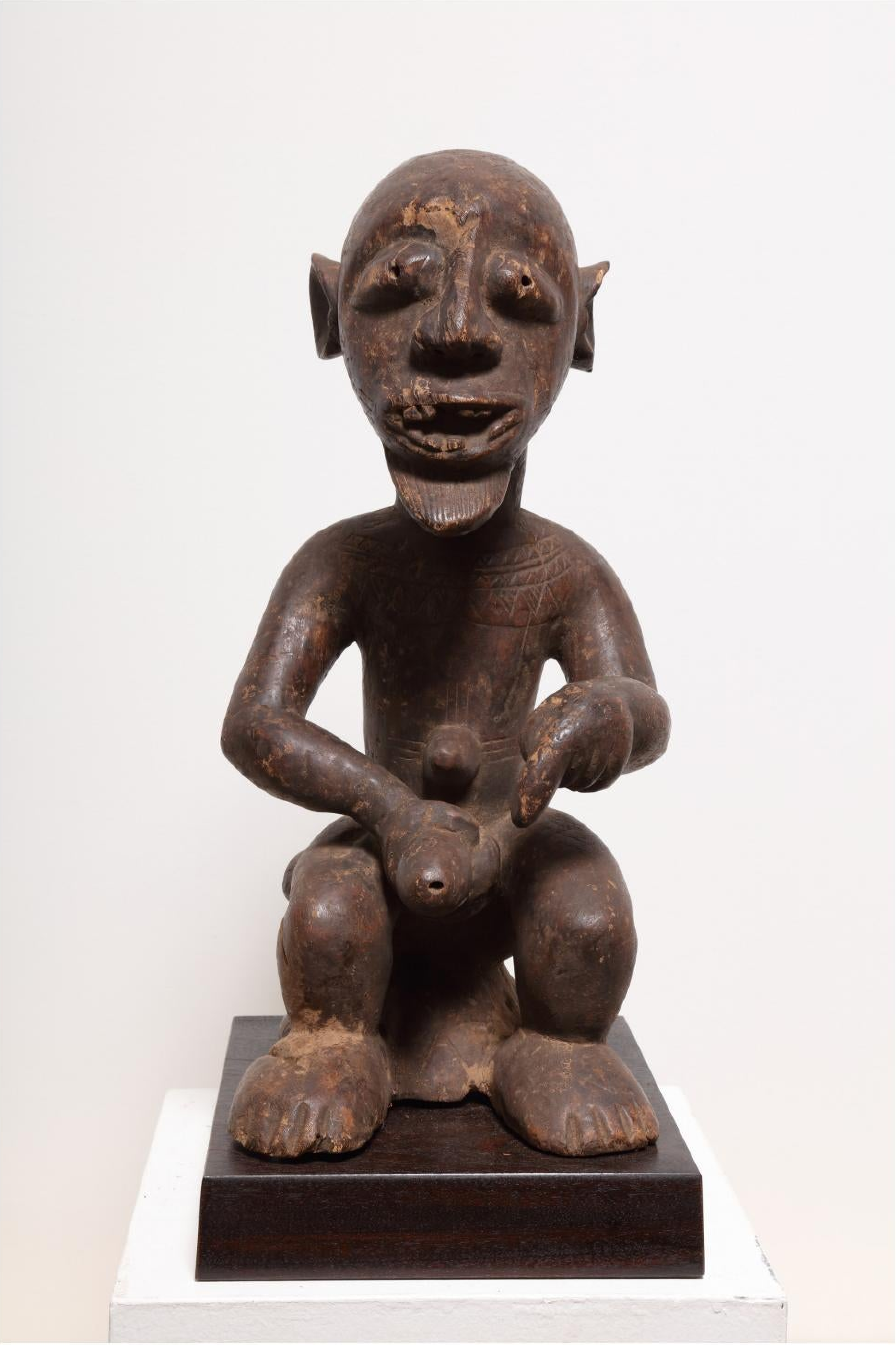
Individuals may activate the magical power of the figure by driving a nail or tack into the surface, stirring the figure to action. “A specialized blade, with flaring head and tapered stem, “looks like a baaku,” an ancient kind of Kongo knife. A baaku was a specialized instrument used to extract the “milk” of the palm wine tree. This blade, when inserted in minkondi, was believed to have the power to kill by supernatural means, by analogy with the term, baaka, the latter meaning not only “extracting palm wine” but also “demolishing, destroying.” It is a kind of blade which classically functions within the minkisi range of metaphoric medicines of “attack”. The great numbers of blades and points driven into the figure are witness to the numbers of clients who have sought the aid of its magical powers.

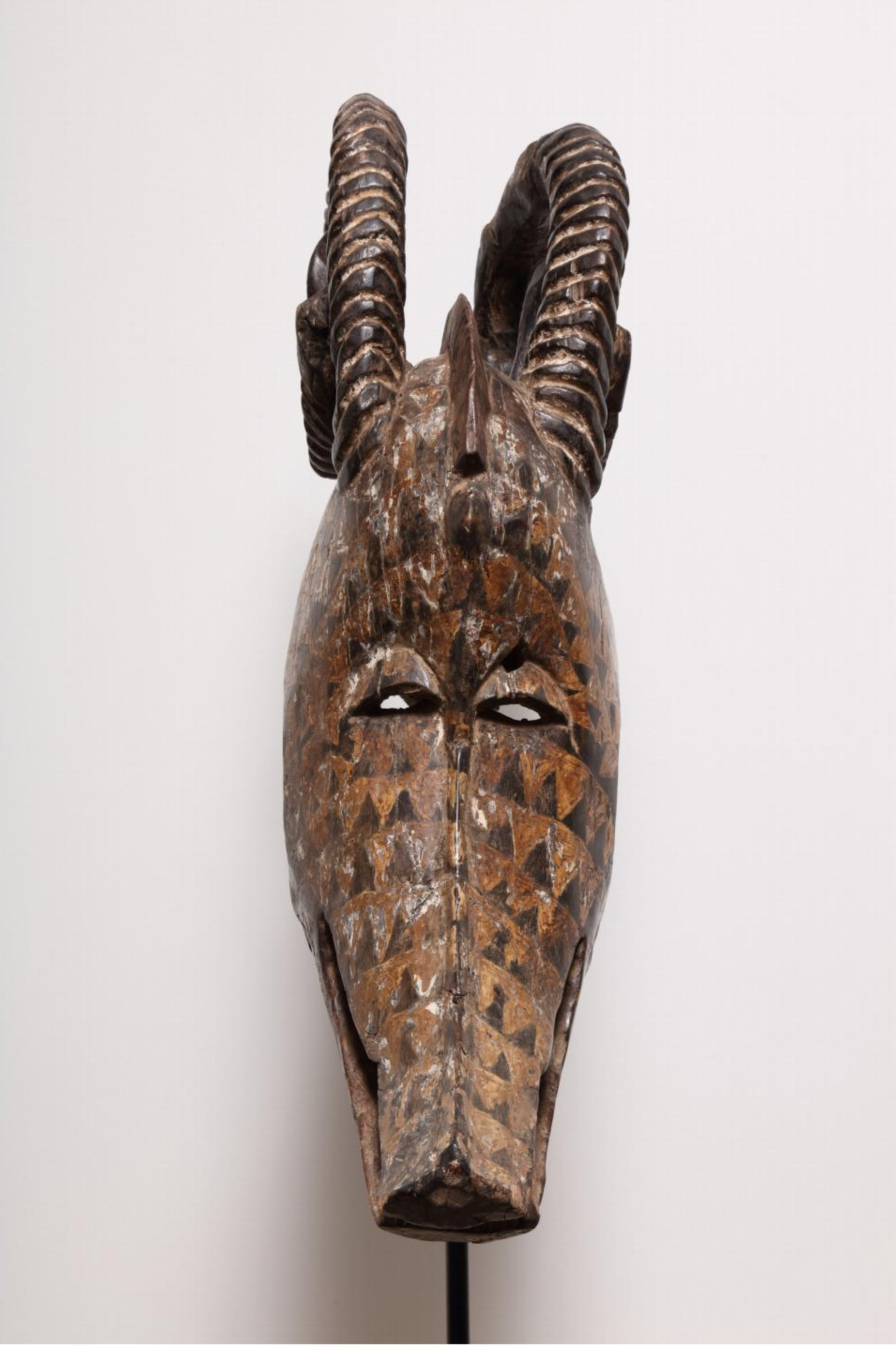
Traditional Mossi society is composed of two important strata. A political elite called nakomse is descended from the mounted warriors who subjugated the original agriculturalist populations of the White Volta River basin at the end of the fifteenth century. A large class of commoners, called nyonyose is descended from the original Dogon, Kurumba, gurunsi, and Gurmantche, inhabitants of the region.

Wooden figures are used by both of these groups. Each important nakomse chief commissions a figure that serves as a symbol of his office when he is alive and as a memorial to his reign after his death. His own figure and the figures that belonged to his royal ancestors are displayed during annual ceremonies when his subjects reaffirm their dependence on him and his ancestors for their well-being. Identical figures may represent spirits that protect nyonyose men's organizations.

This work of sculpture on wood symbolizes the Mossi chieftain's role as the progenitor of the entire tribe or culture. The figures aggressively suggestive motioning by the left armatures to its erect penis speaks to his position as the most potent regenerative member of the his community. The figure was intended to increase fertility, both symbolically and sometimes through use in divination rites.

MOSSI FERTILITY SCULPTURE | CIRCA 1816 | Carved Wood on Stand | 48 x 10 x 24 Inches



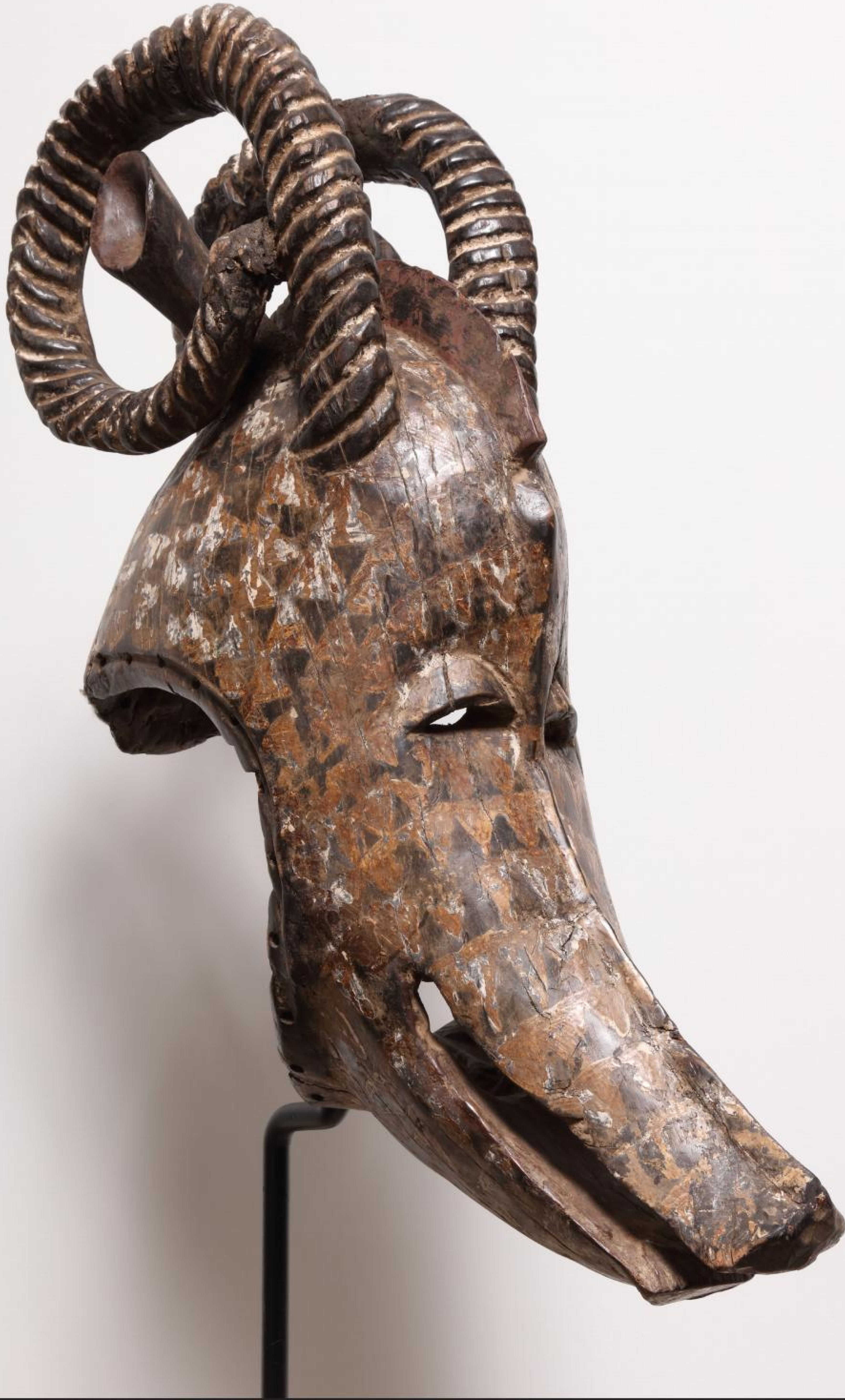


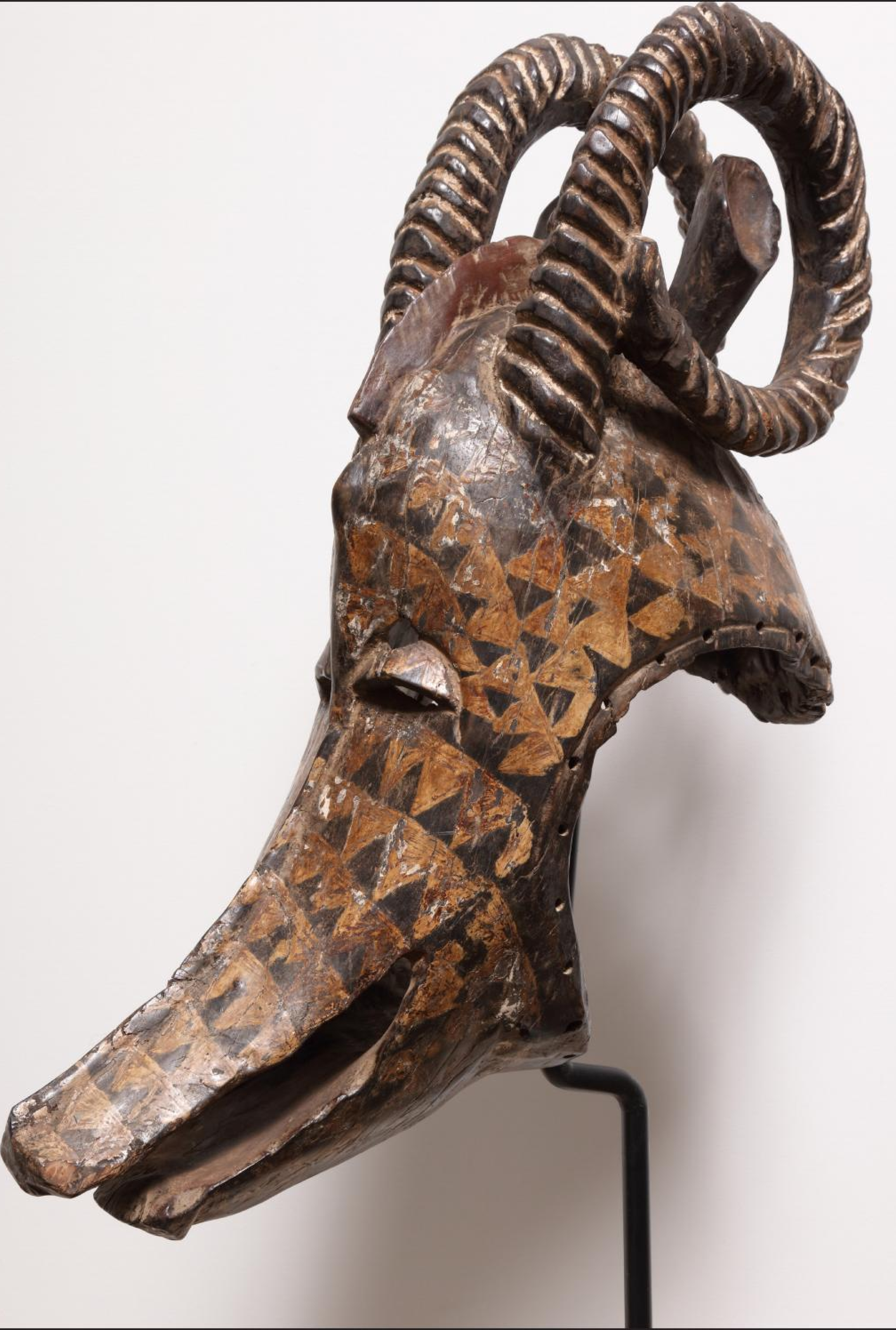
Mossi masks occupy an important position in the religious life of the Nyonyose, the ancient farmers and spiritual segment of society among the Mossi people. The use of masks in initiations and funerals is quite typical of all the Voltaic or Gur-speaking peoples, including the Nyonyose, Lela, Winiama, Nouna, Bwaba, and Dogon. Masks appear at burials to observe on behalf of the ancestors that proper burial procedures were carried out. They then appear at several funeral or memorial services held at regular intervals over the years after an elder has died.

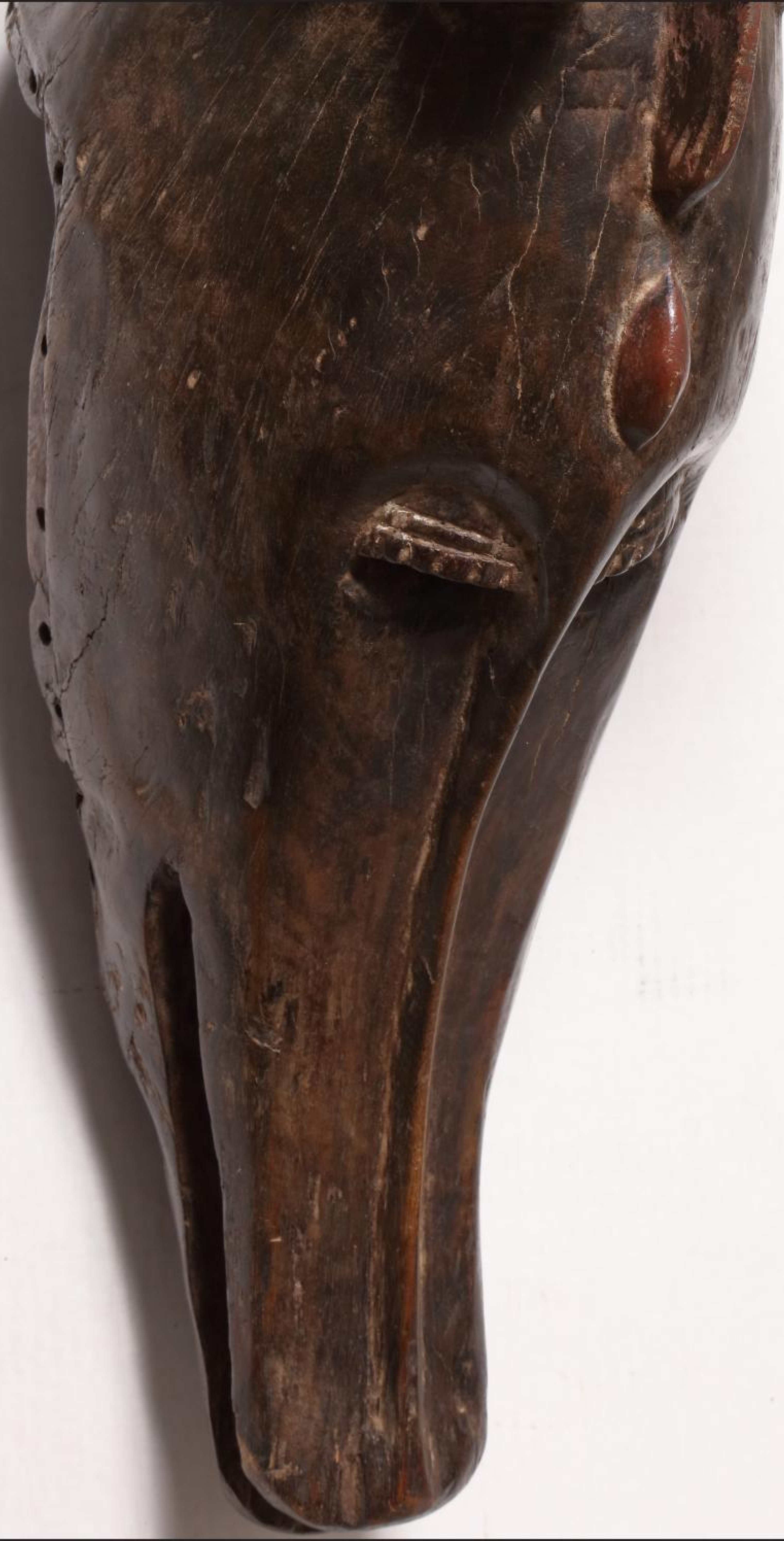
Masks attend to honor the deceased and to verify that the spirit of the deceased merits admission into the world of ancestors. Without a proper funeral the spirit remains near the home and causes trouble for his/her descendants. Masks are often carved of the wood of Ceiba pentandra, the faux kapokier. They are carved in three major styles that correspond to the styles of the ancient people who were conquered in 1500 by the invading Nakomse and integrated into a new Mossi society: In the north masks are vertical planks with a round concave or convex face.

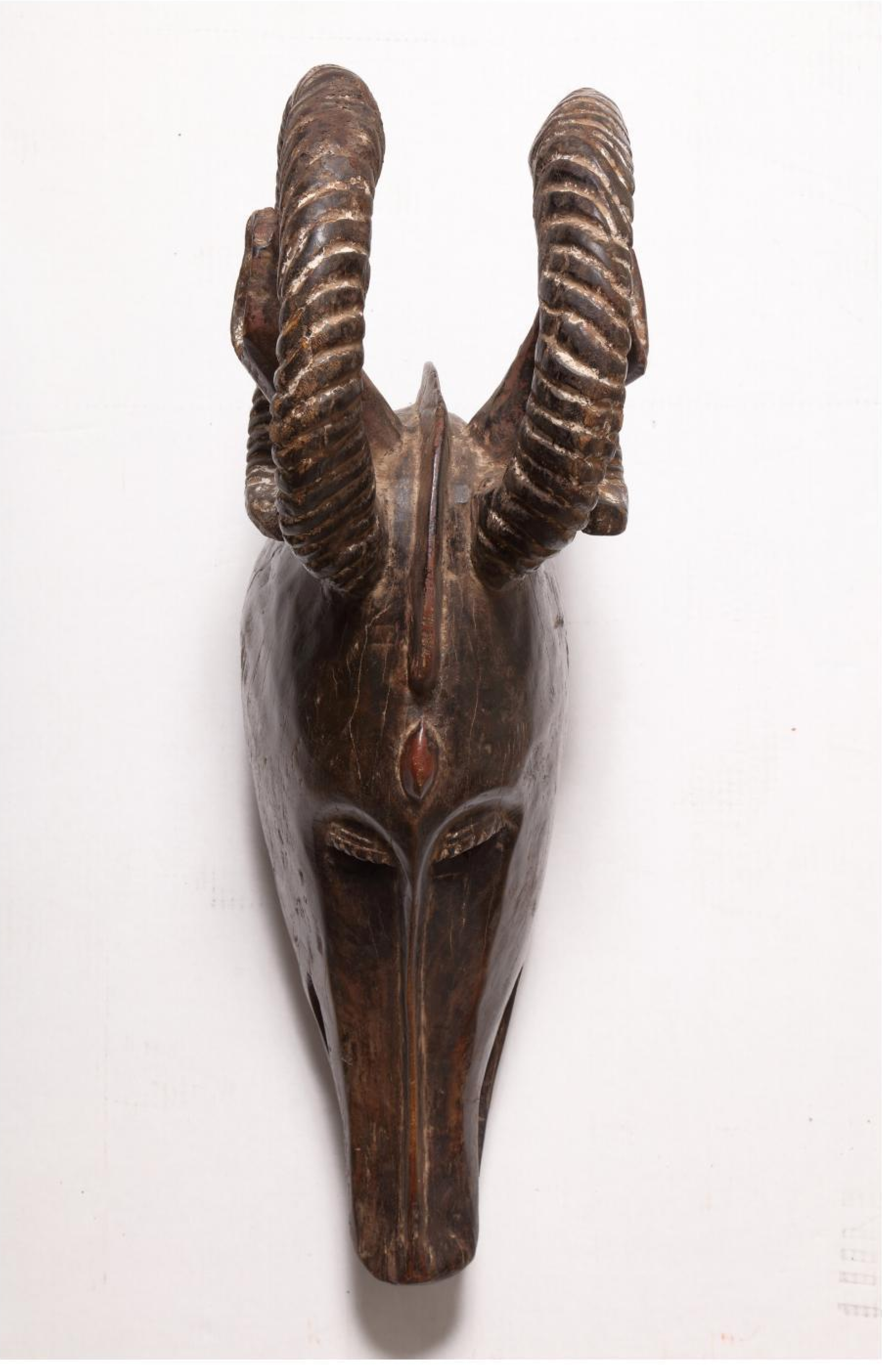
In the southwest masks represent animals such as antelope, bush buffalo, and various strange creatures, are painted red, white and black. In the east, around Boulsa, masks have tall posts above the face to which fiber is attached, . Female masks have two pairs of round mirrors for eyes, Two female Mossi masks of the eastern style at a year-end ceremony in the village of Zegedeguin and small masks, representing Yali, “the child” have two vertical horns.

MOSSI ANTELOPE MASK MALE | **CIRCA 1850** | Carved Wood on Stand | 48 x 10 x 24 Inches



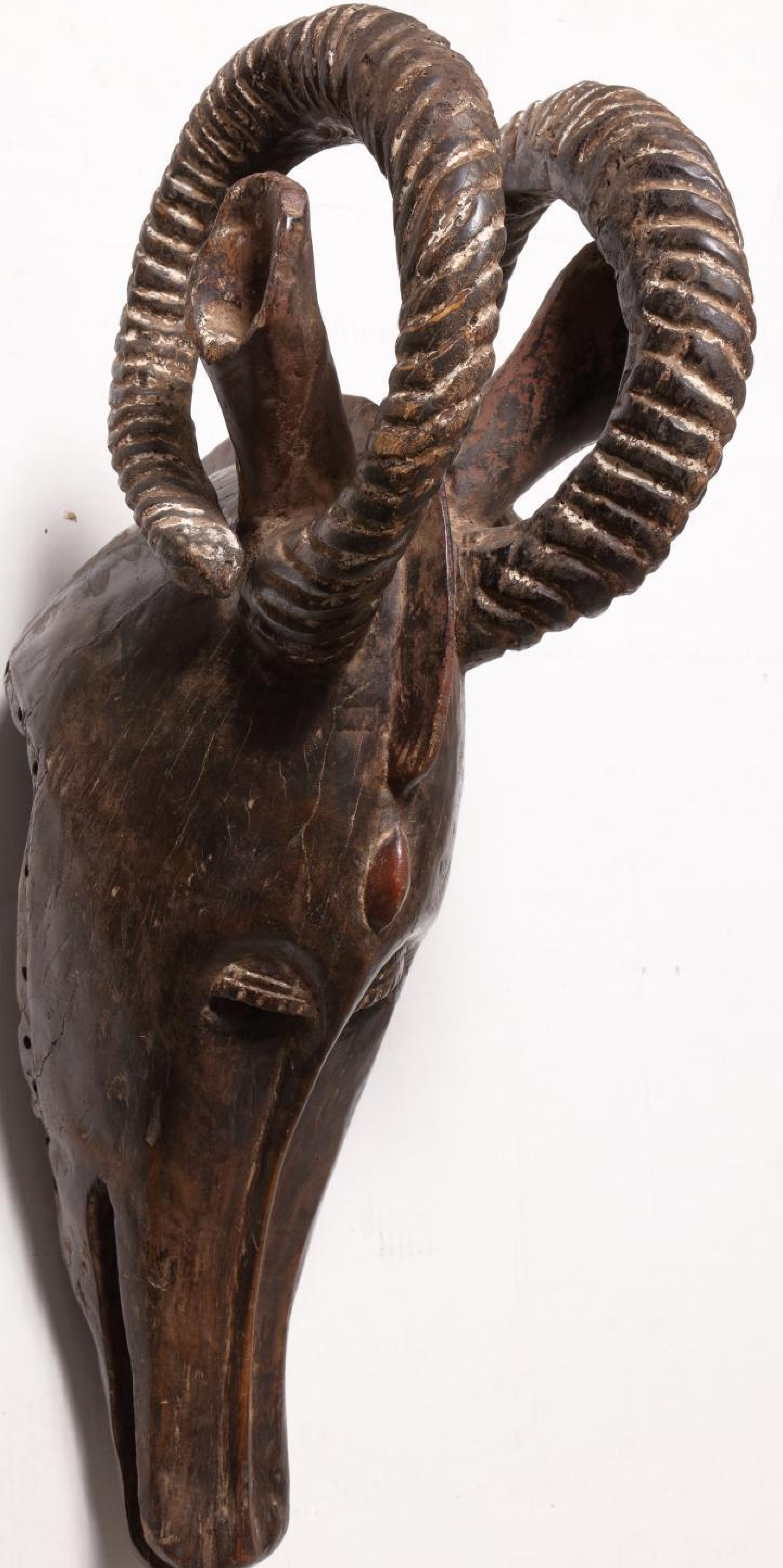


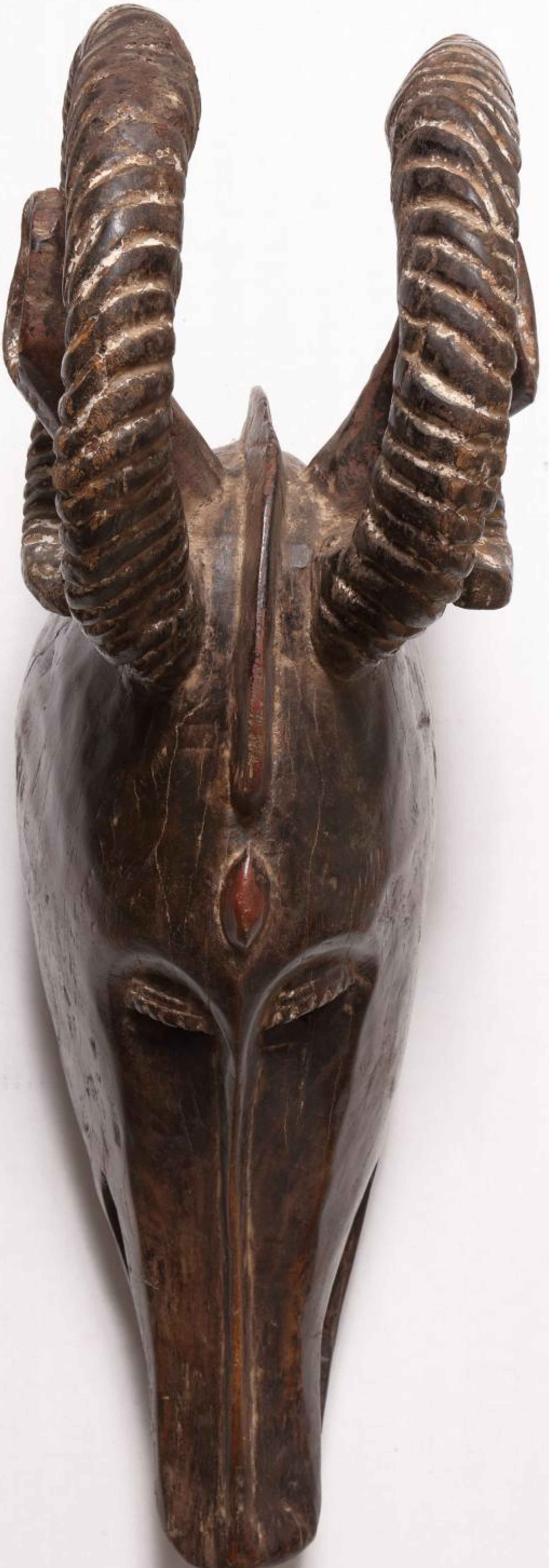


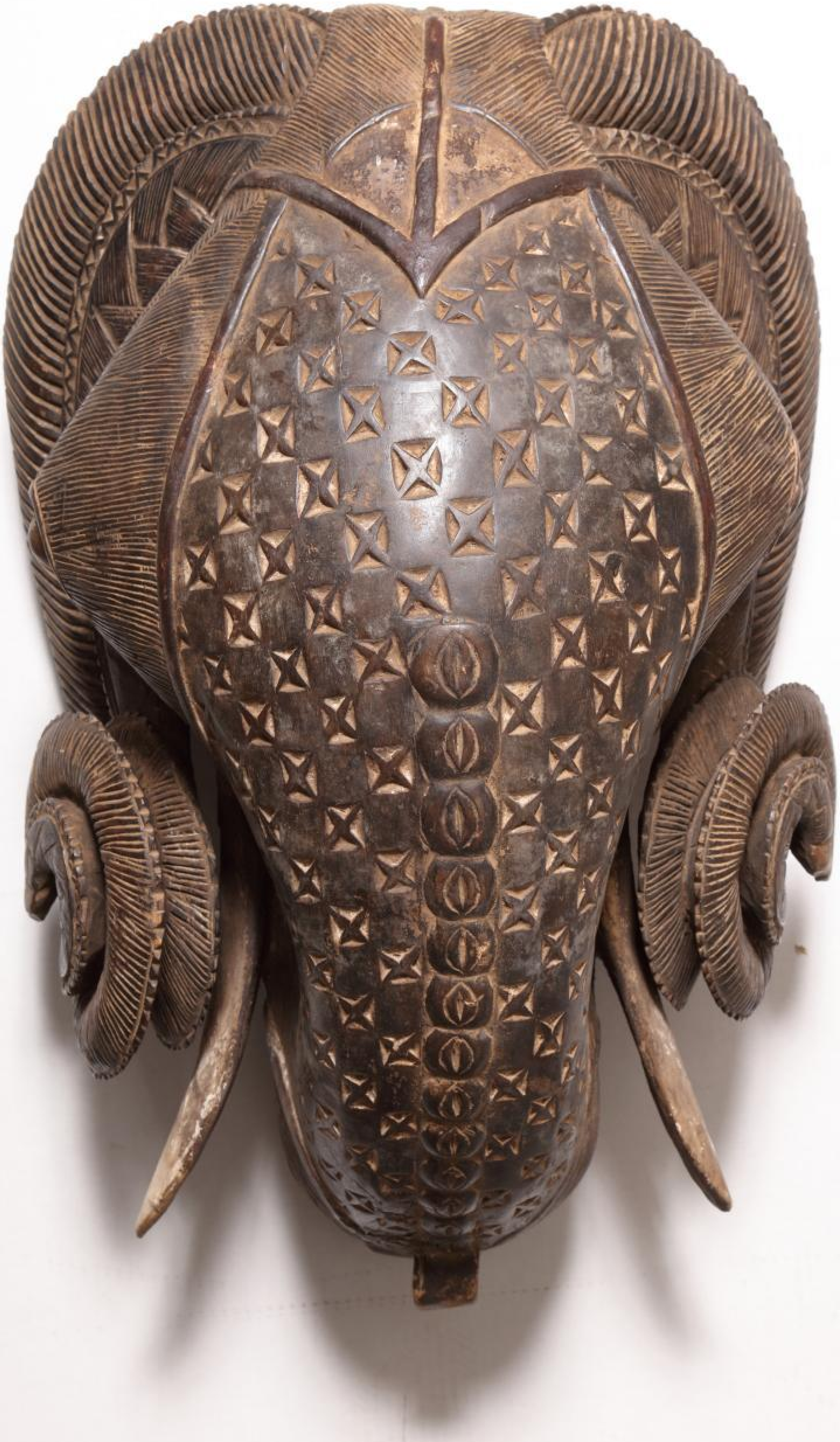


MOSSI ANTELOPE MASK FEMALE | CIRCA 1850

Carved Wood on Stand | 48 x 10 x 24 Inches





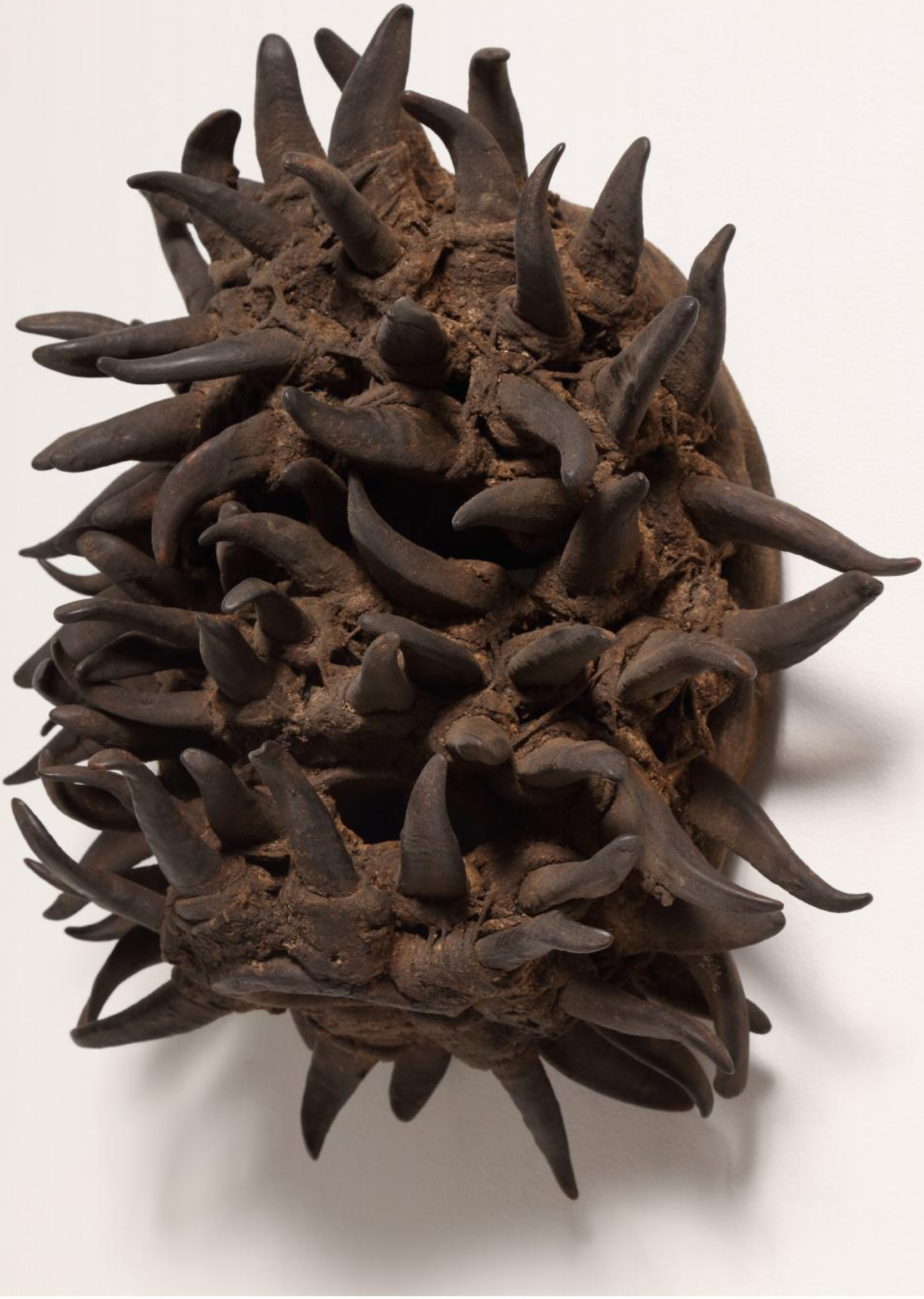


This Yoruba Ram Mask constituted part of the courtly regalia of an olowo, the ruler of the Yoruba state of Owo in southern Nigeria. It was created as a decorative element of an orufanran, a type of ceremonial ensemble worn by the olowo and high-ranking chiefs during state ceremonies. Consisting of a bulky coat or shirt covered in red flannel scales, the orufanran was studded with ivory images of human faces and the heads of crocodiles, leopards, and rams. The outfit relates to the chief's military duties, and it is no coincidence that the animals depicted are those characterized by their strength and ferocity.

A wealthy state with close political ties to the neighboring Benin kingdom, Owo was famed for the virtuosity of its ivory carvers. Despite its small size, this ram's head is richly embellished with intricate incised designs and dark inlaid wood. Its aesthetic impact relies on a sophisticated interplay of bare and adorned surfaces. While the muzzle is dominated by linear grooves and quatrefoil knots (a motif used extensively in Yoruba art), the forehead presents broad passages of flat surface interrupted by diamonds of squares and circles. The interaction of opposing surfaces continues along the spreading horns that frame the ram's face. Deep ridges on the horns' base balance the smooth forehead, while the unadorned tips offset the elaborate motifs on the muzzle.

YORUBA RAM MASK | CIRCA 1990 | Carved Wood on Stand | 48 X 10 X 24 Inches

MEDICINE FETISH | 18TH CENTURY | LIBERIA-DAN | Wood And Leather | 17 x 15 x 9 Inches

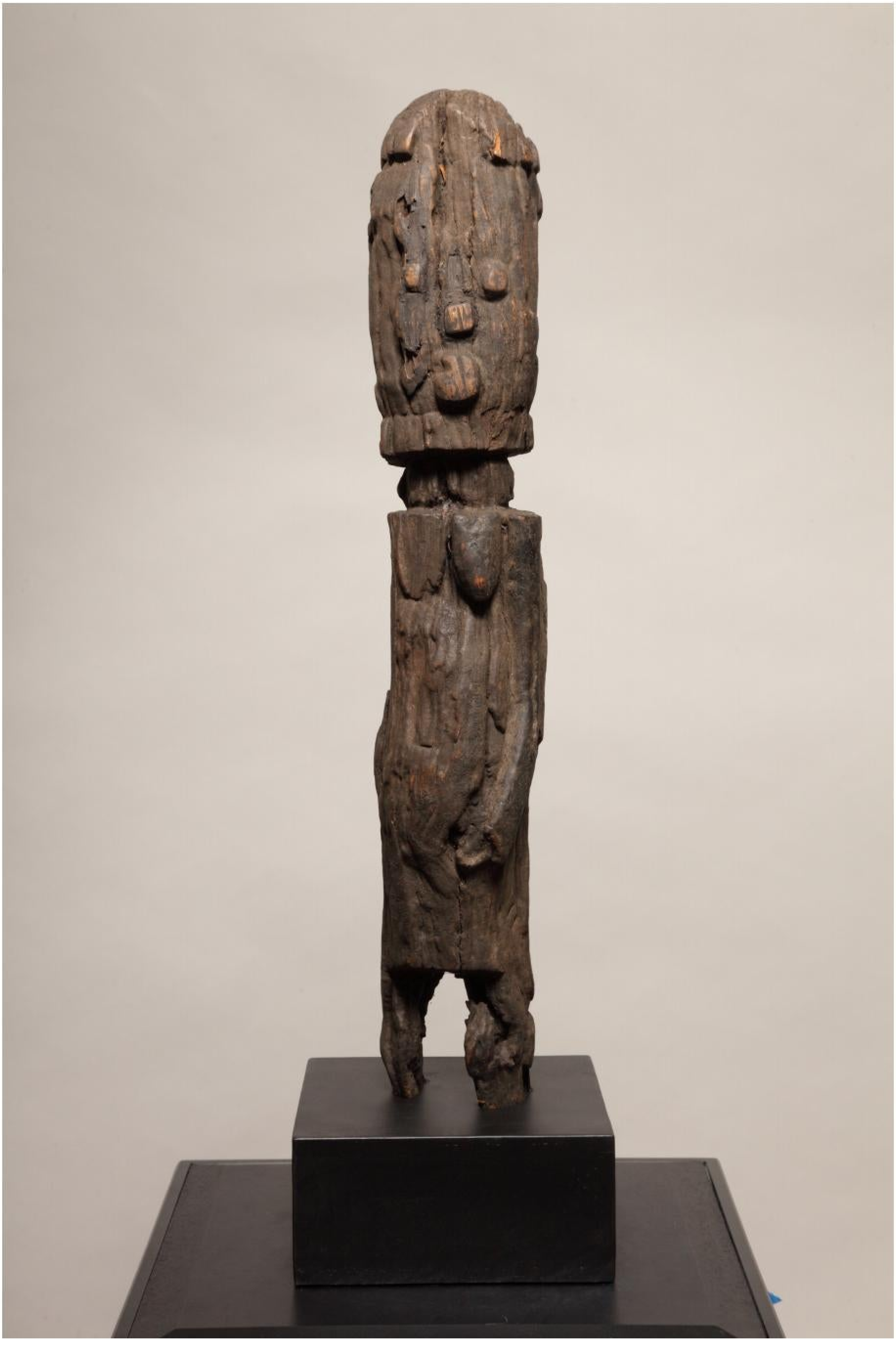


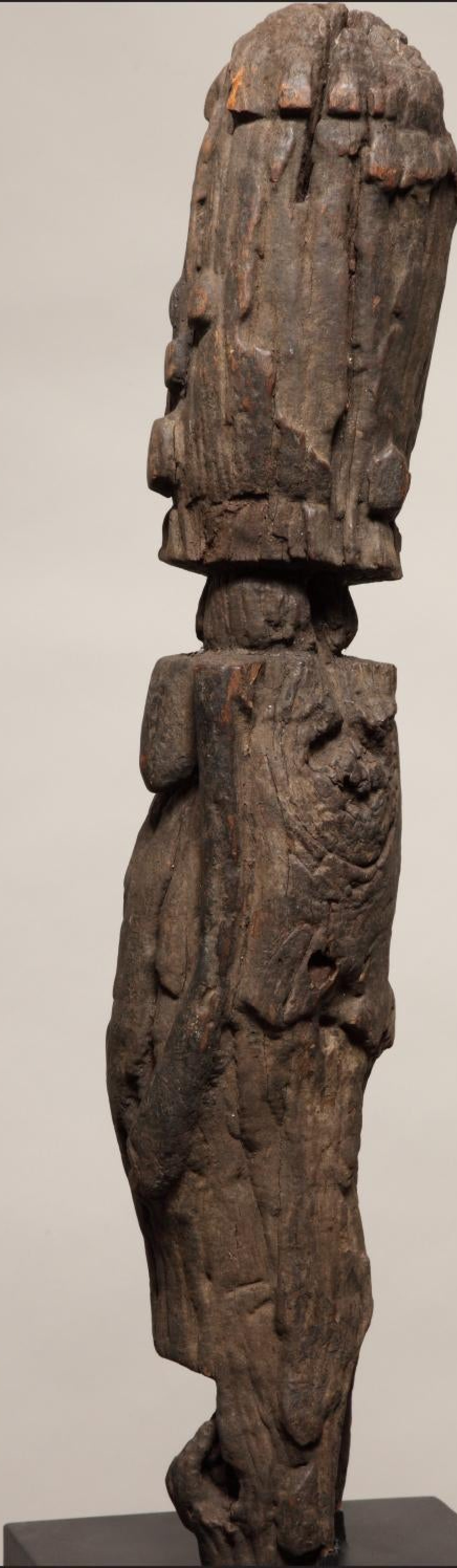
The Tellem were the people who inhabited the Bandiagara Escarpment in Mali between the eleventh and sixteenth centuries CE. The Dogon people migrated to the escarpment region around the 14th century.

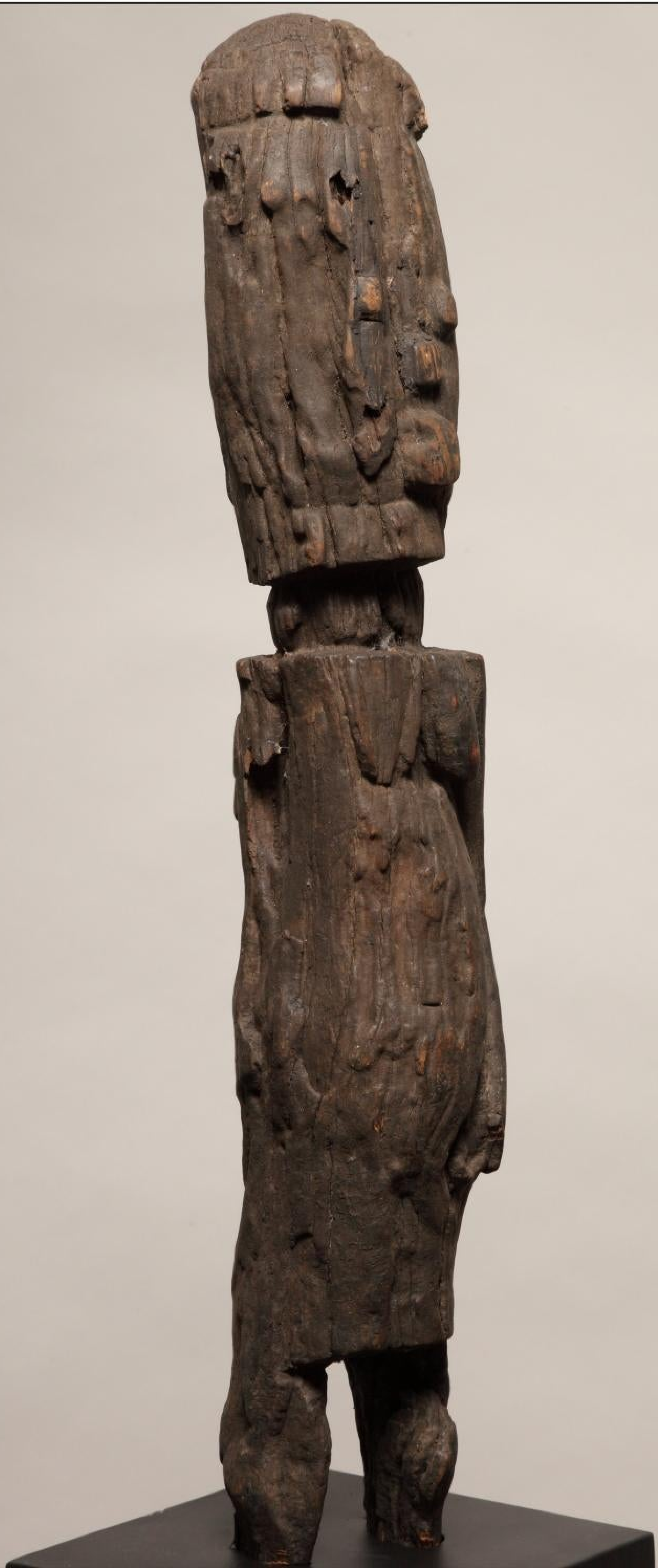
The Tellem were pygmies or “small red people” who built dwellings around the base of the escarpment as well as directly into the cliff-face. Many of these structures are still visible in the area. The Tellem people disappeared for unknown reasons. It is thought by some in Mali today that the Tellem possessed the power of flight.

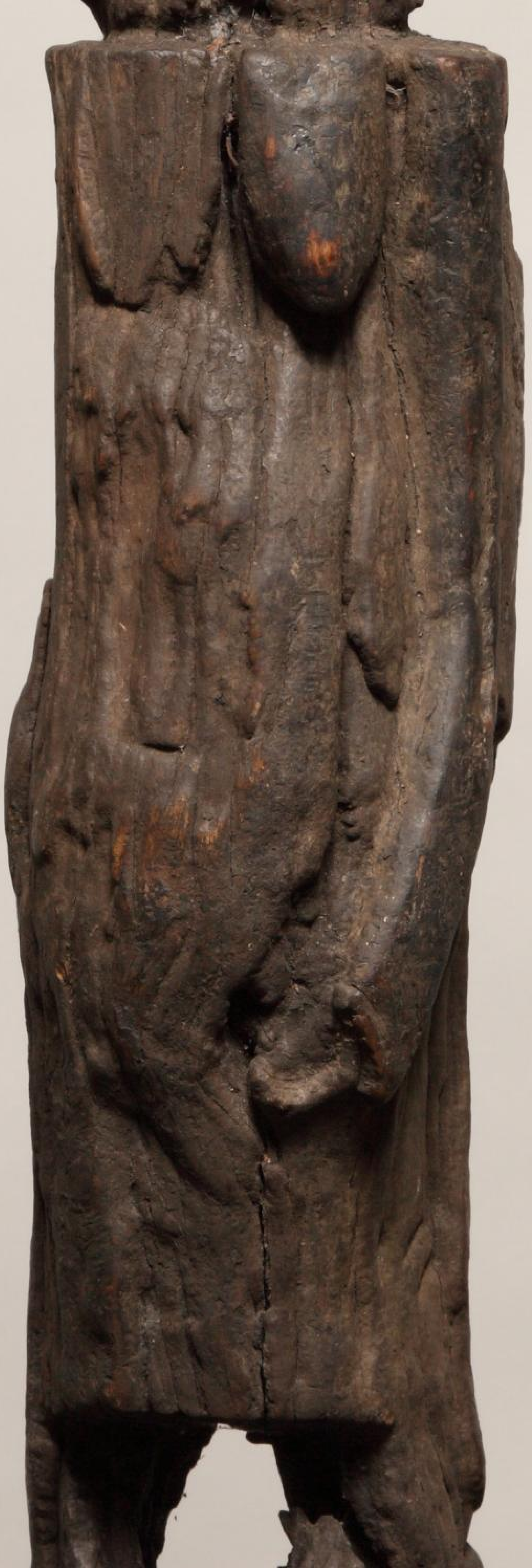
The Tellem/Niongom peoples housed many of their relics and ancestral monuments and items of wealth in caves and underground tunnels, which might explain the almost petrified quality of the wood and the brilliant patina of this piece.Aged established at the height of the classic period of this culture, between the tenth and eleventh centuries.

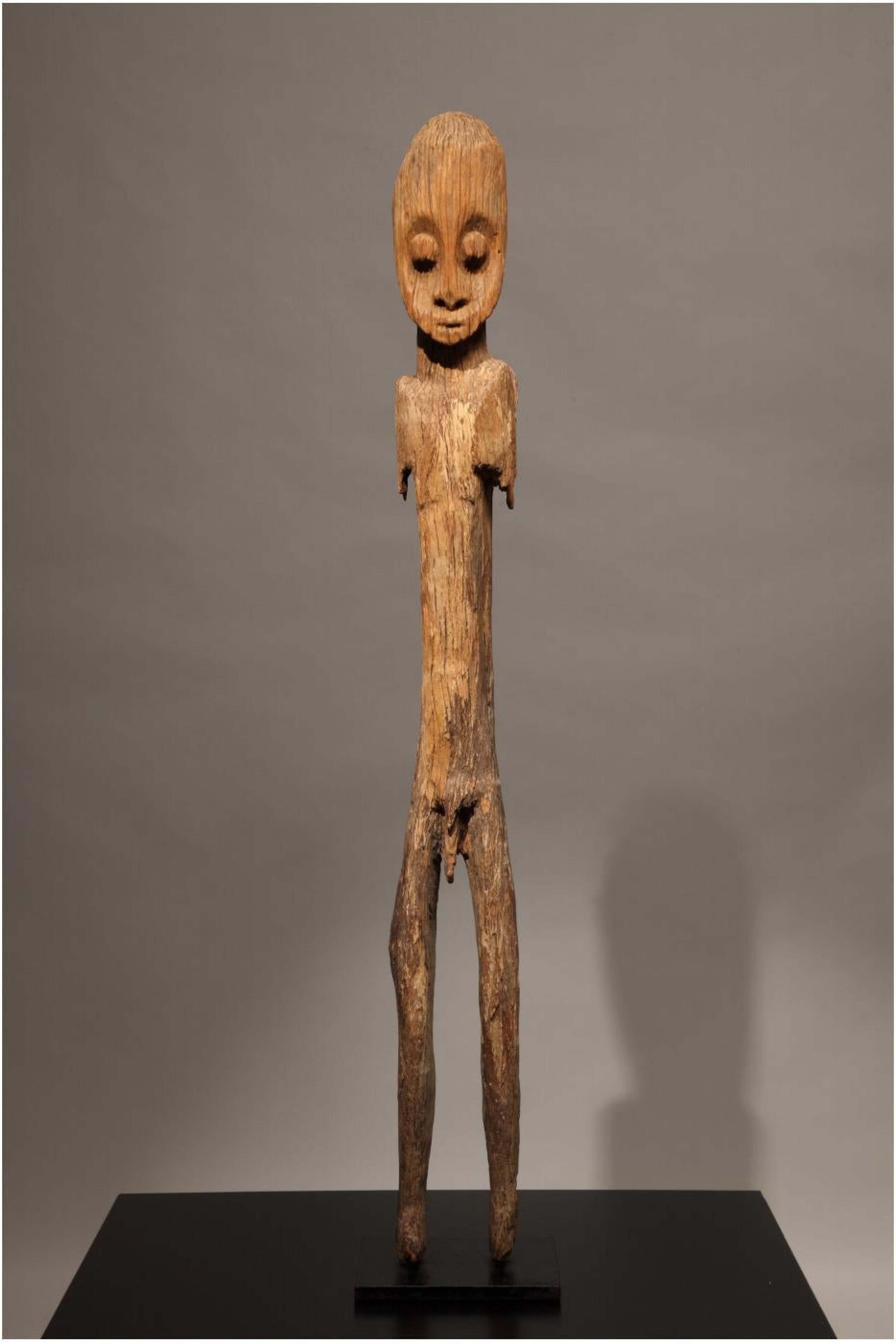
TELLEM, PRE-DOGON | CIRCA 11-16TH | Figure Carved Wood | 32 x 5 x 5 Inches









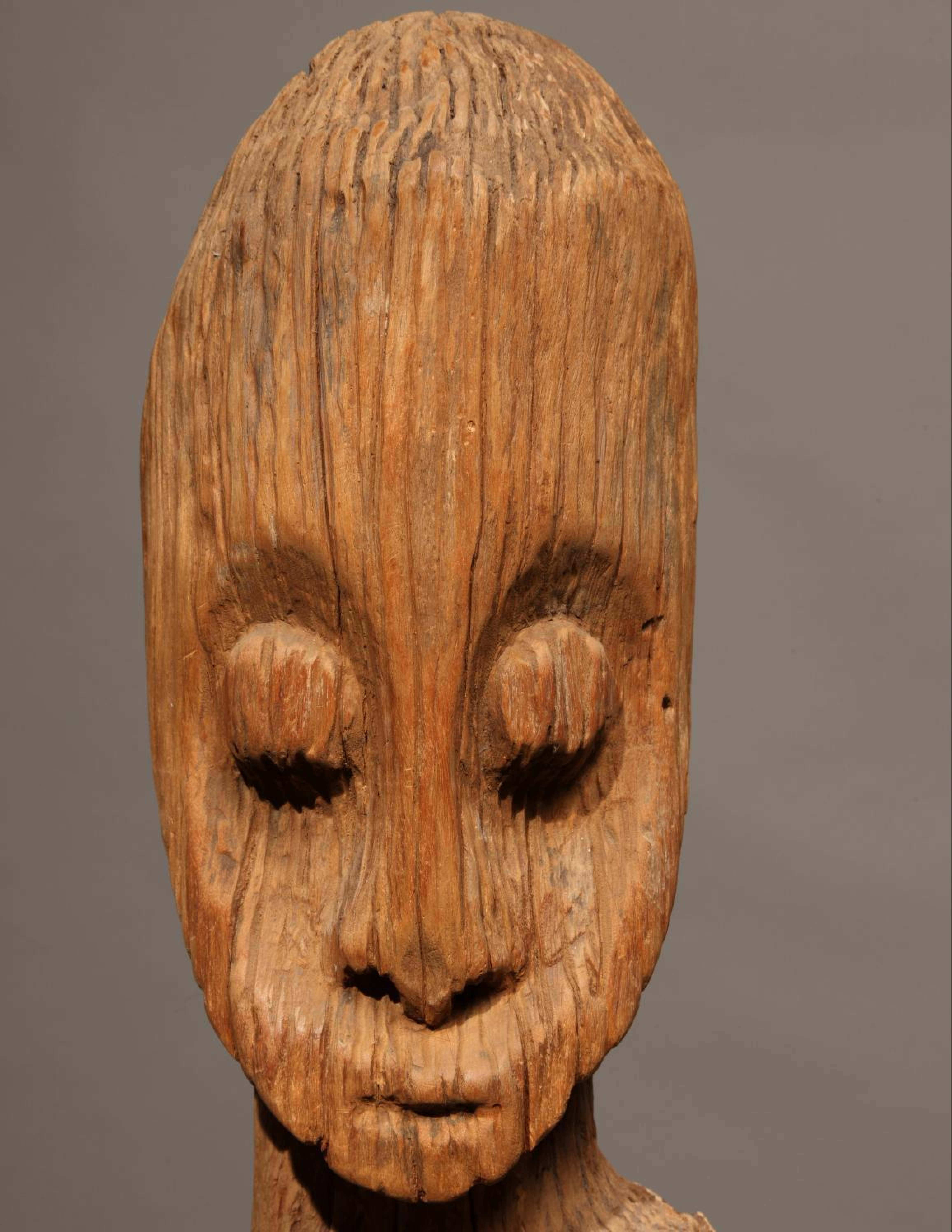


Papuanew Guinea Carved Figures normally represented gods deities or ancestral heroes. They were sometimes made free standing but are also often found as part of a larger object like the top of a house pole.

Papuanew Guinea Carved Figures vary in size from very small charms hidden on your person to monumental sizes. Most figures have a cult/religious purpose and are full of energy and life. In New Guinea, it is only men who are supposed to see these carvings. Women and uninitiated male children are Taboo to go near structures containing them.

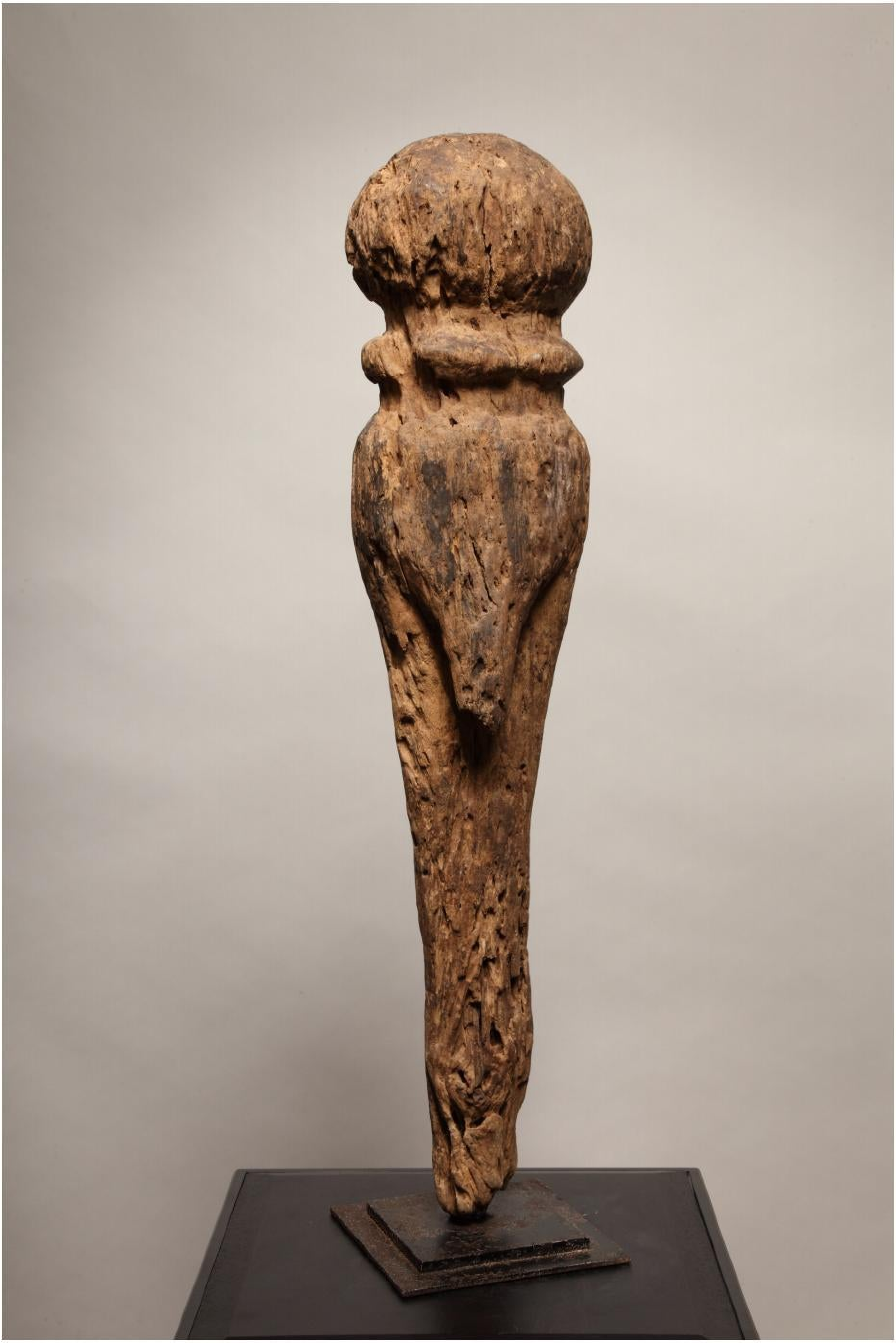
This is original work by a Papuan carver which is meant to be a stylistically non-traditional one-off statement.

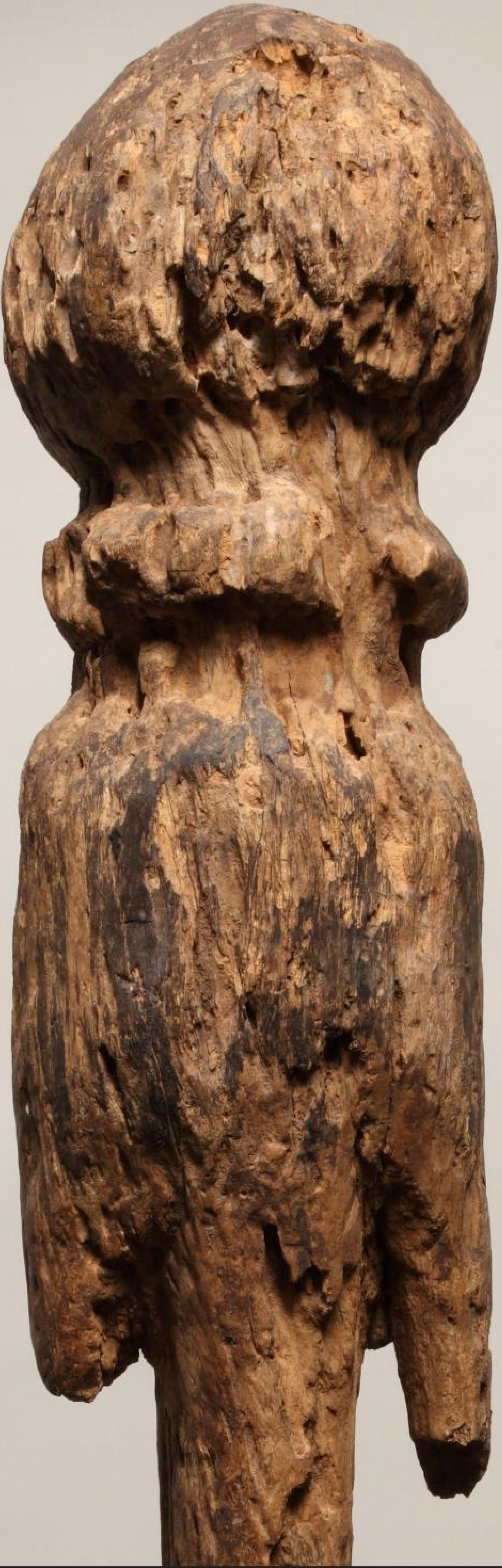
PAPUANEW GUINEA EFFIGY FIGURE | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 63 X 7 X 5 Inches

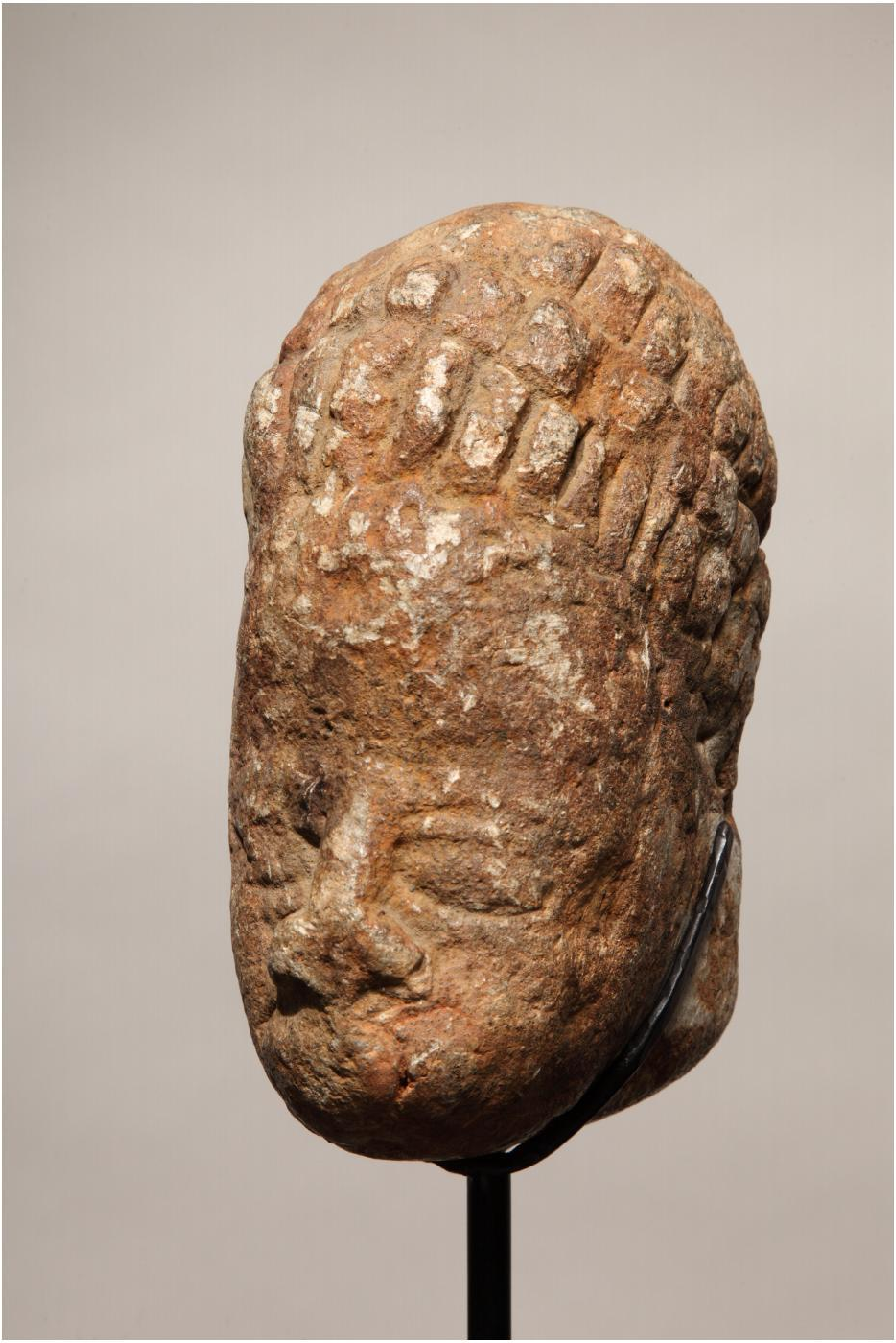


Moba Shrine figures (Tchitcheri Sakwa) stand as sentinels in front of Togo homes and village entrances, and are also placed on intimate family altars, providing protection for those who respect them. Traditionally Tchitcheri could only be birthed by individuals whose fathers were diviners, the carving considered a highly delicate operation, requiring special prayers and precautions for these ritually charged objects. The Moba presented here has seen many years of exposure, and as it has weathered become more highly valued in the culture. In their minimalist aesthetic, Mobas merge the best of the "primitive" and the post-contemporary.

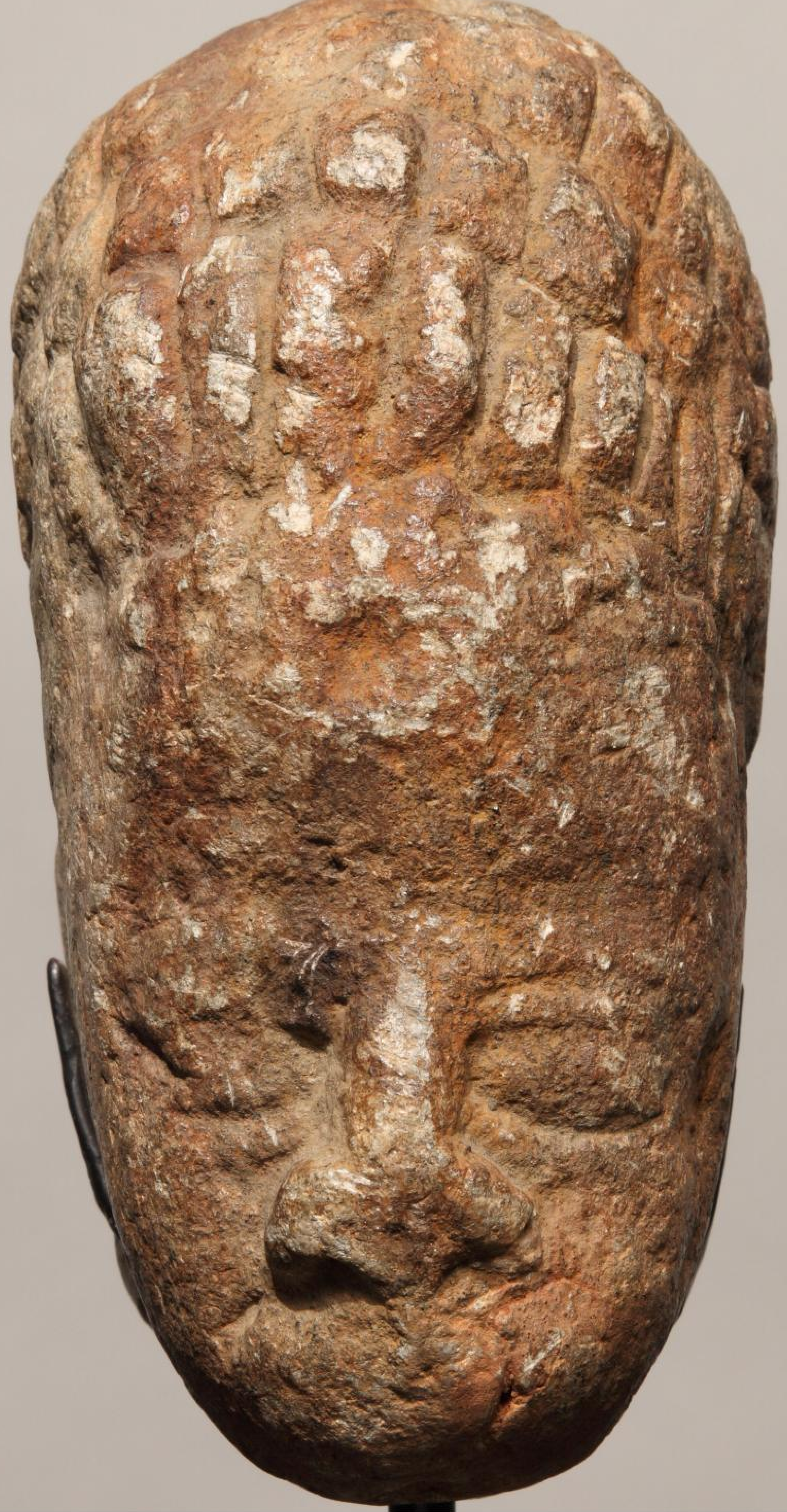
MOBA FETISH FIGURE | C.19TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 37 X 6 X 8 Inches







NIGERIAN STONE HEAD | CIRCA 20TH CENTURY | Carved Stone | 10 X 4.5 Inches

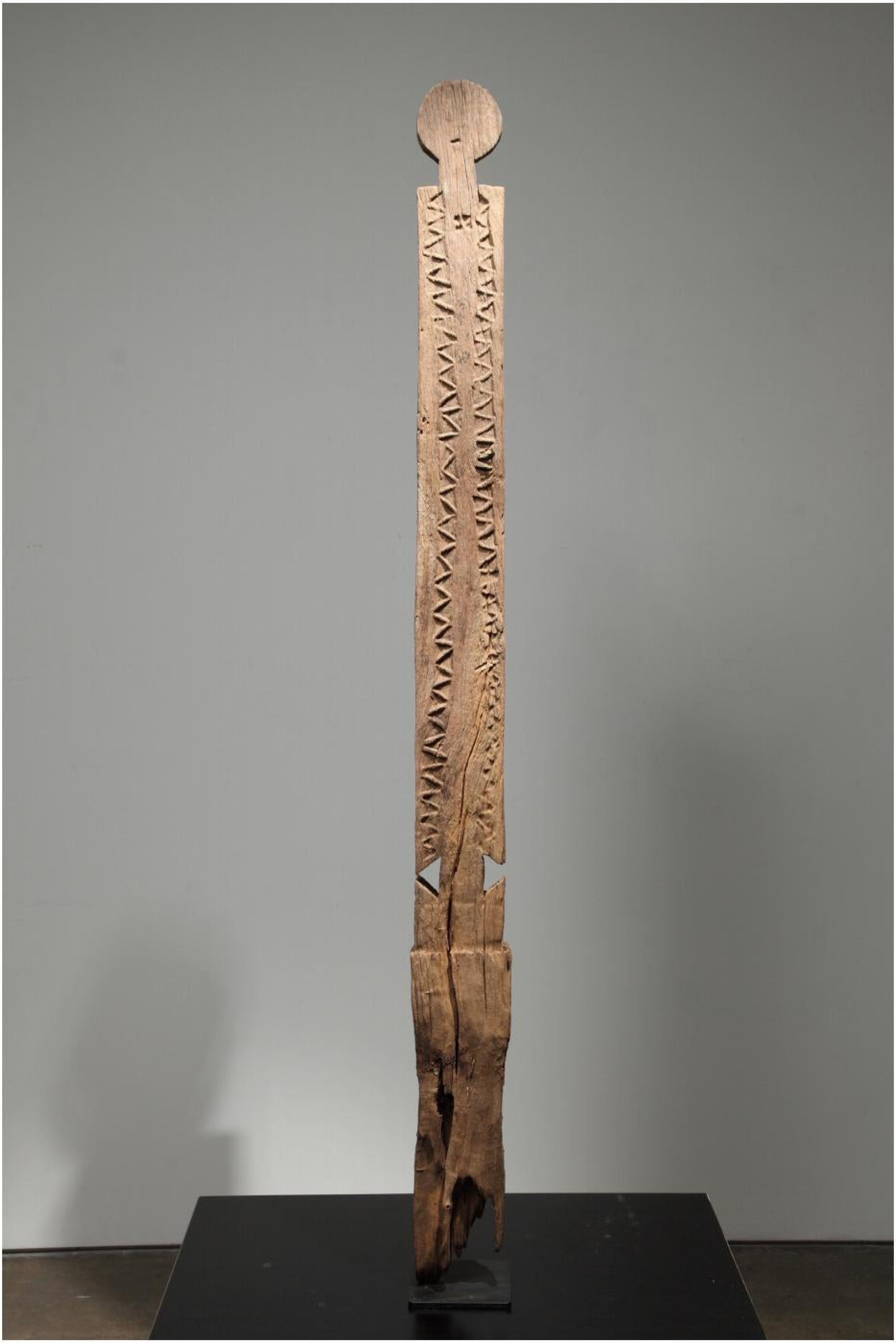


VIGANGOS

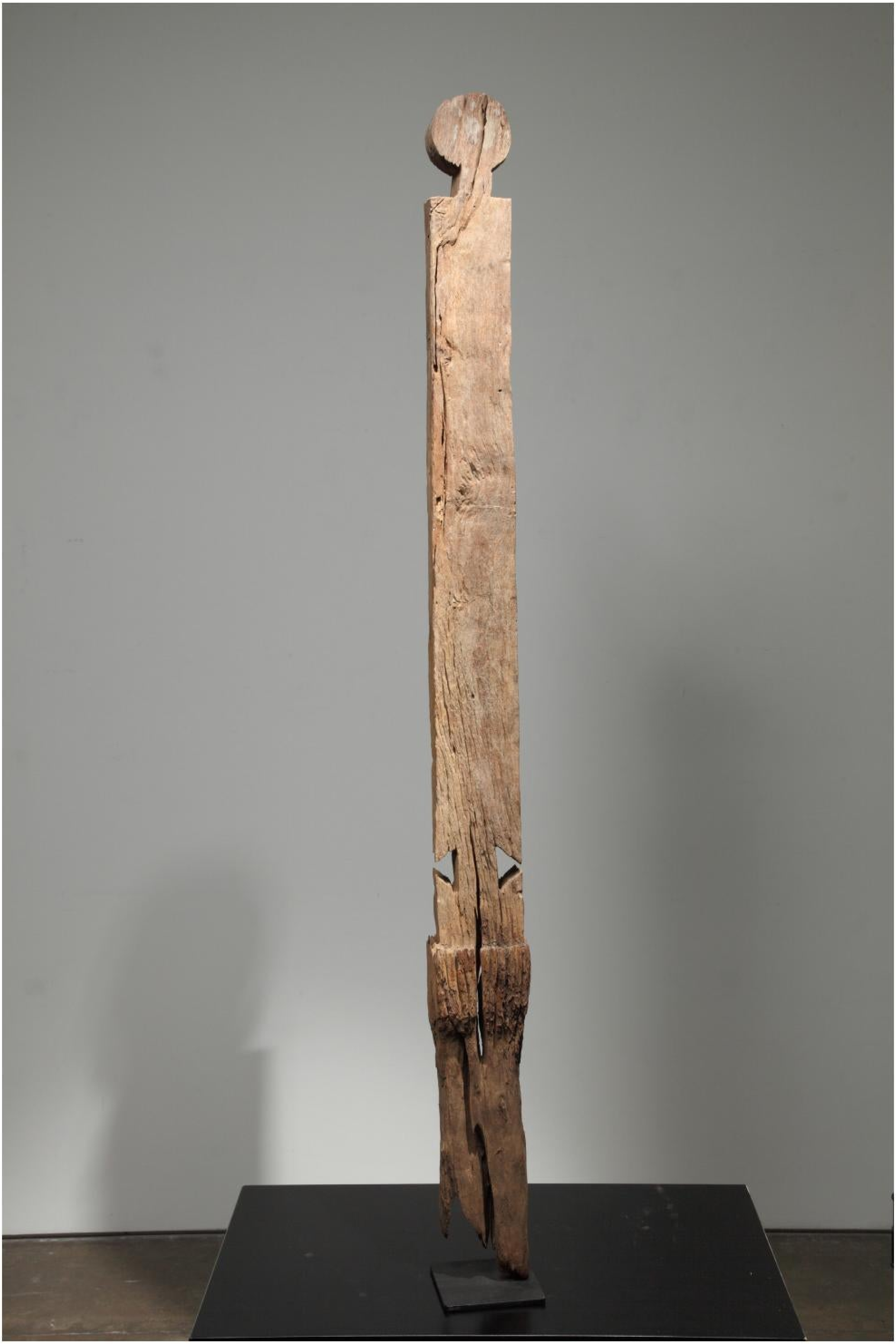
Carved memorial statue erected by the Mijikenda peoples of the southeastern Kenya coast. The vigango, which can be stylized, abstracted human-form effigies and are placed vertically rising out of the earth, honor a dead member of the secret Gohu society, or the "Society of the Blessed". Their role is not to indicate the location of physical remains but to provide a new abode - a new body, indeed - for the spirit of the deceased. Like the smaller and less elaborate koma pegs, together with which they form a sort of genealogical map for the household, vigango are erected sometime after the death of an individual, usually only when the spirit of the deceased indicates discontent with its lack of a body by appearing in a dream to some living relative.

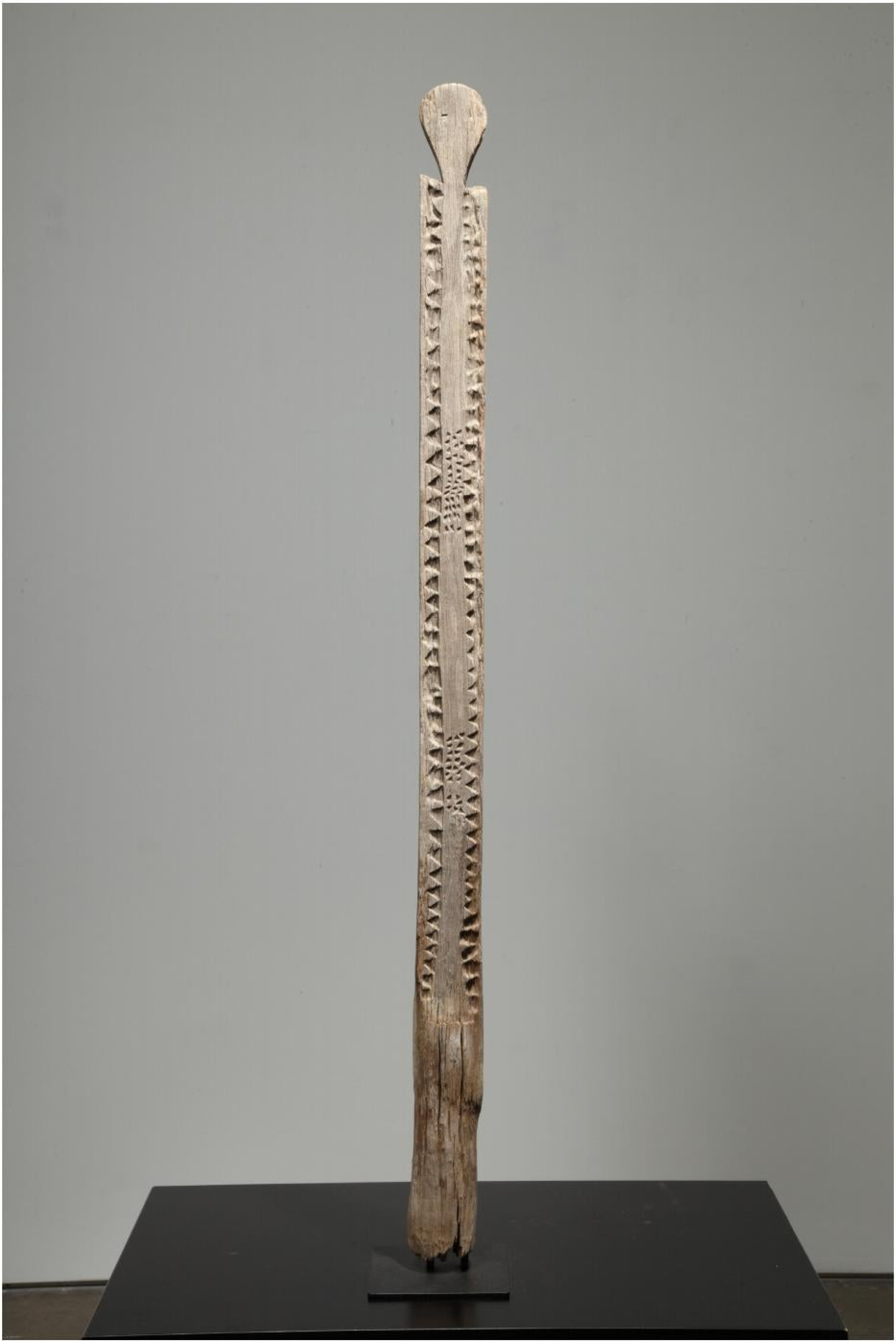
They were traditionally allowed to stand until they naturally decomposed, or they were abandoned and replaced at subsequent village locations by a second generation figure known as a kibao (plural: vibao), thereby transferring away whatever spiritual power was thought to remain from the original kigango. This was a natural result of the Mijikenda's centuries old practice of slash and burn agriculture and, subsequently, the periodic changing of village locations.

The hard-wood kigango is approximately life-size and may have been painted. Numerous vigango are now in U.S. museums, although some were discovered to have been stolen and were returned to Kenya. However, vigango were openly and legally for sale from reputable art galleries and curio shops in Kenya from the early 1970s until at least the mid-1990s.

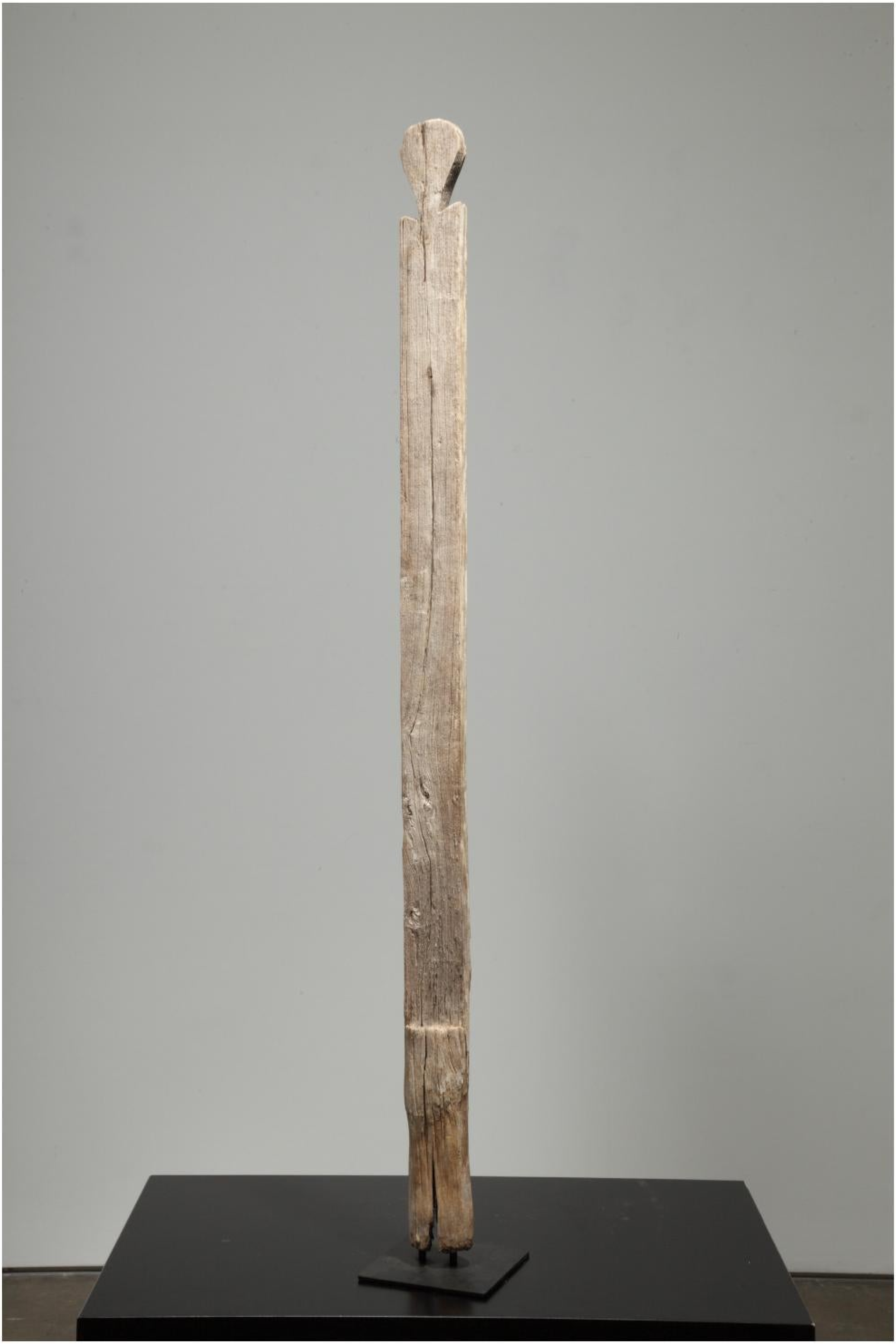


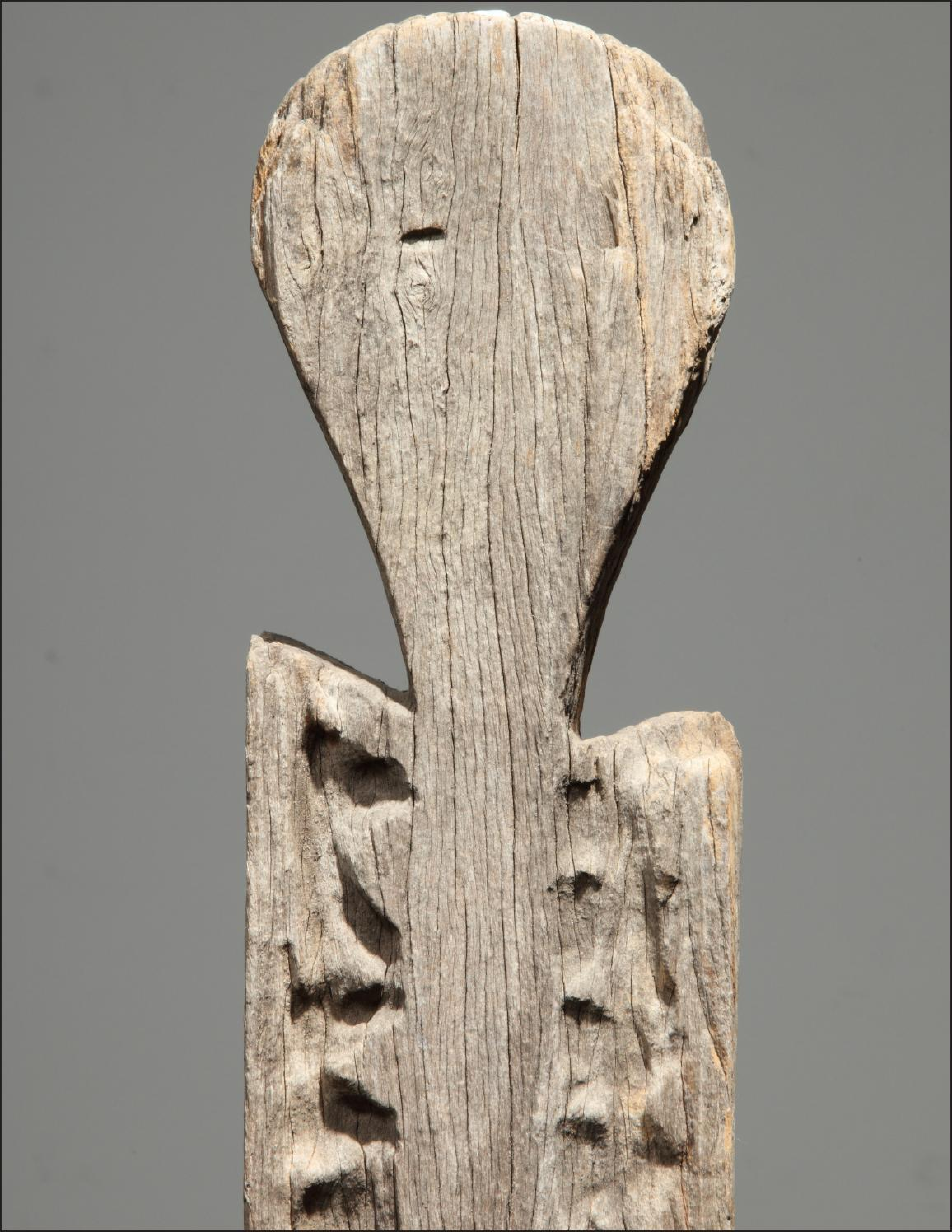
MIJIKENDA TRIBE VIGANGO 3 | **19TH CENTURY** | Carved Wood | 81 x 7 x 4 Inches

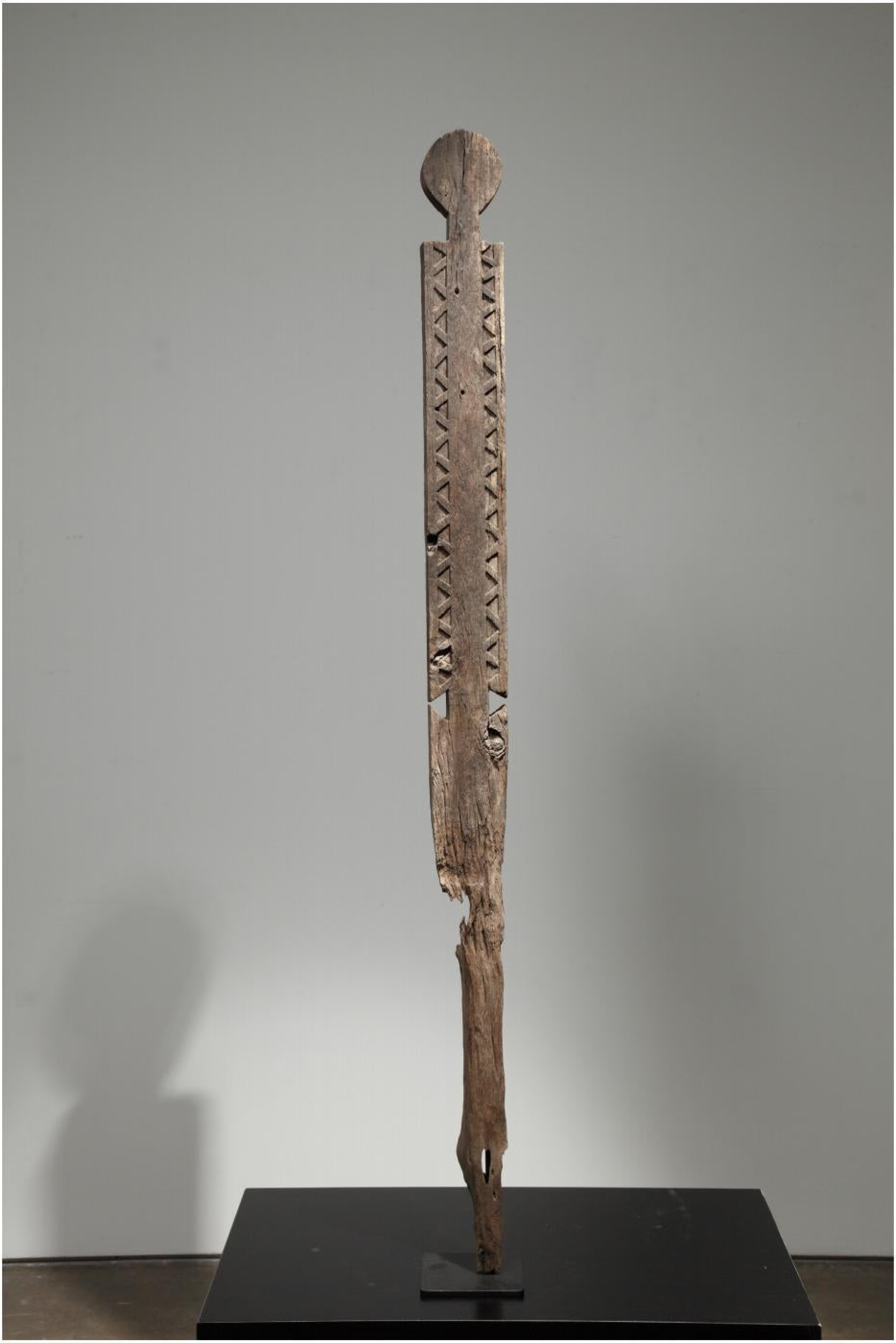




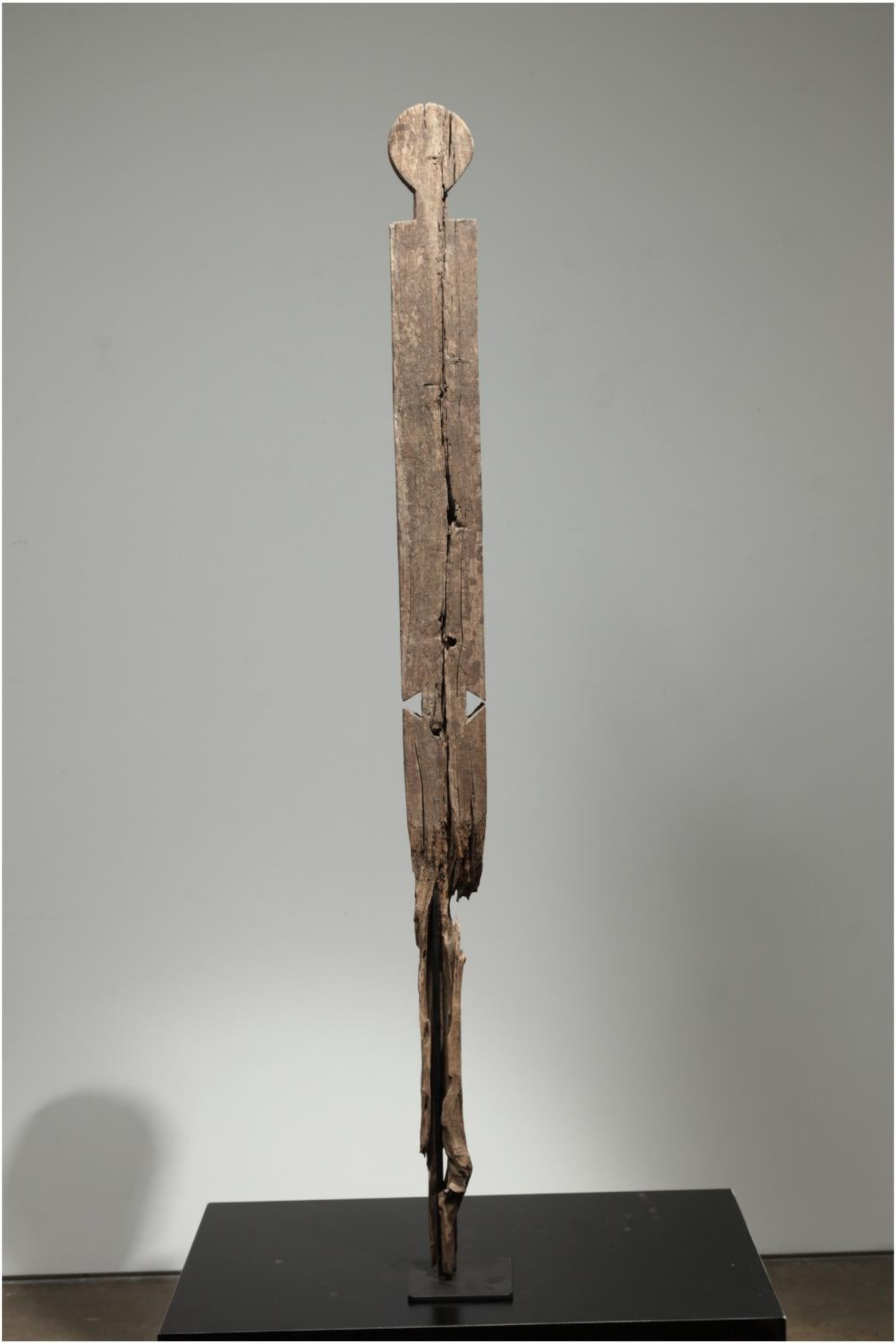
MIJIKENDA TRIBE VIGANGO 4 | 19TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 67 x 3.5 x 2.5 Inches

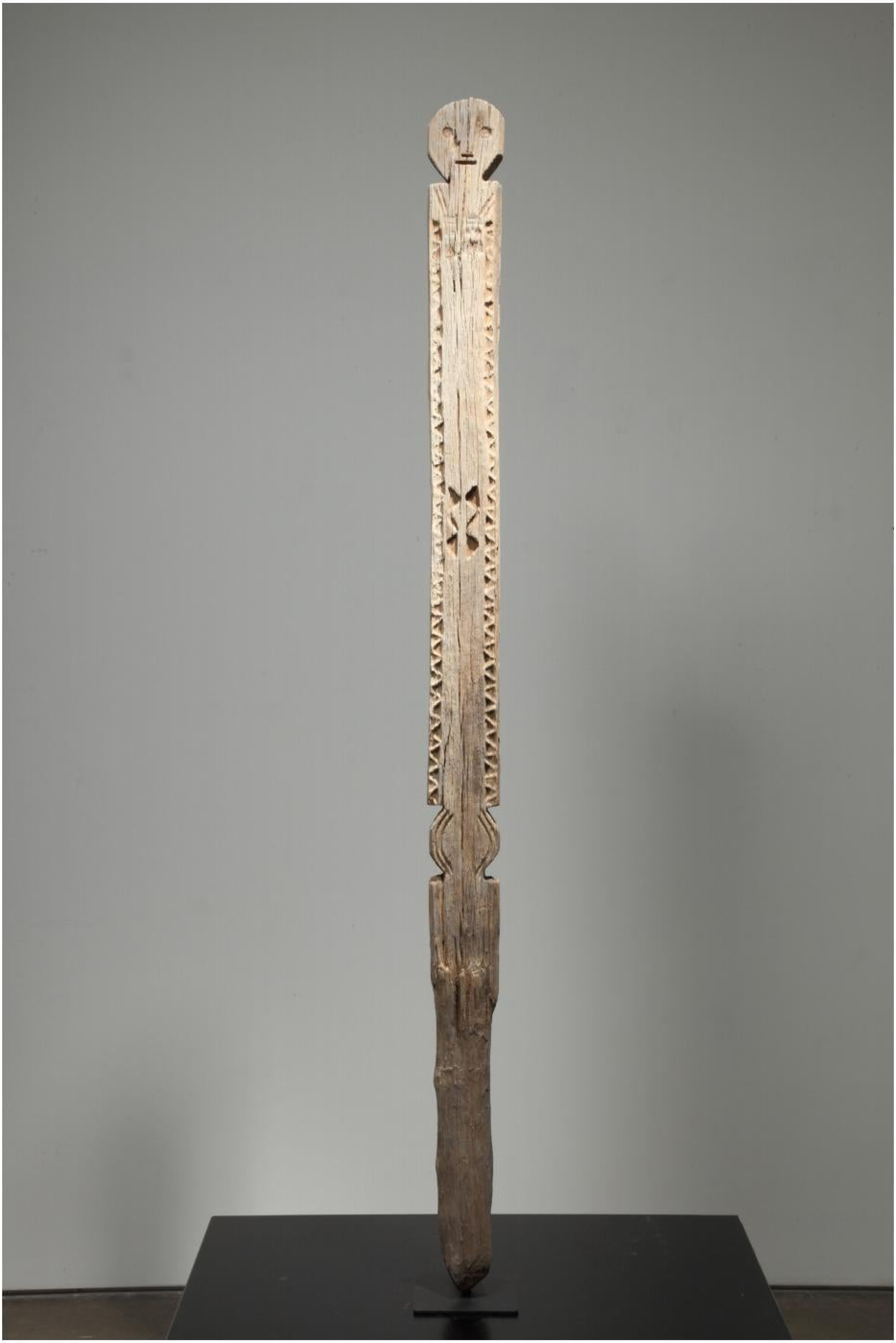




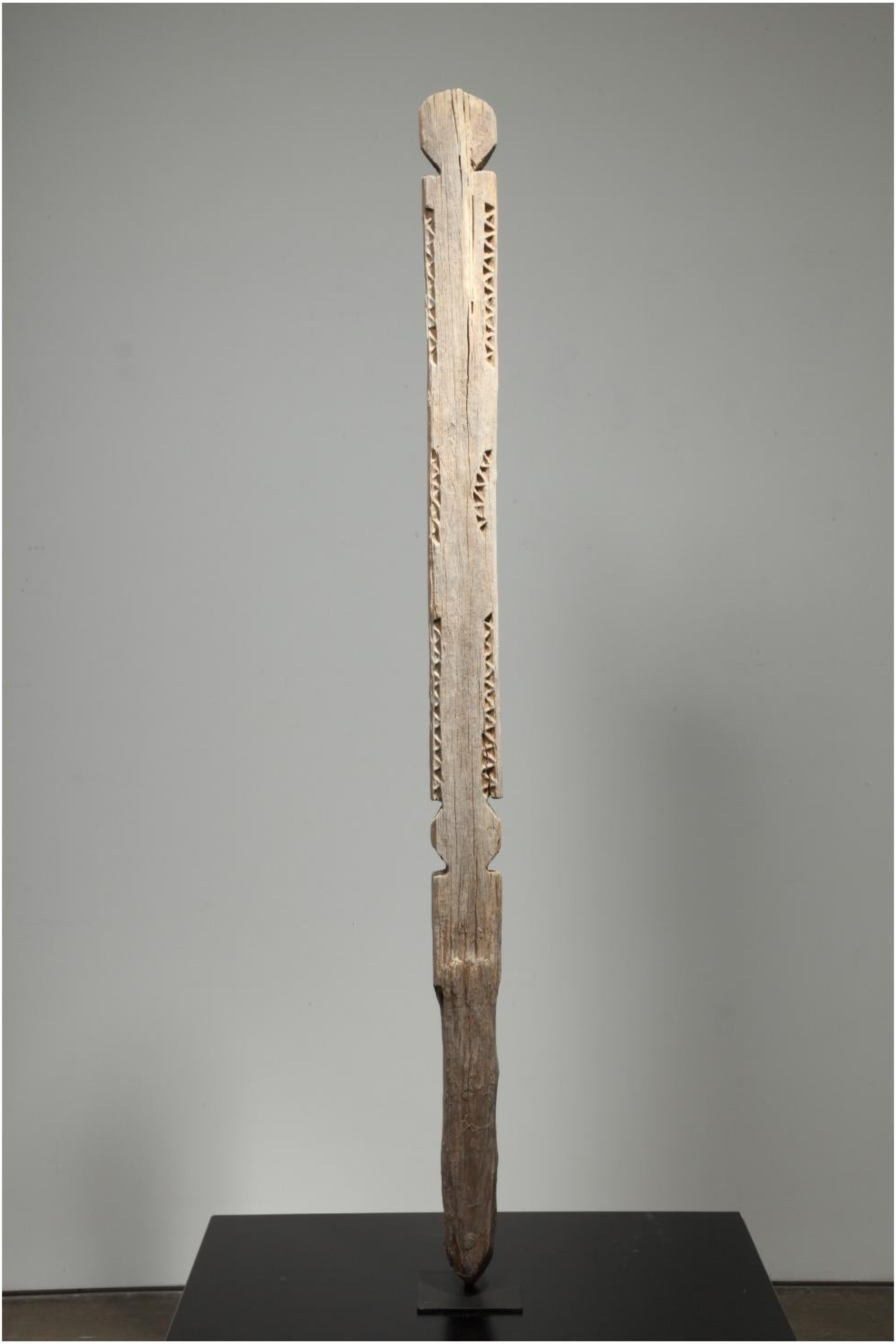


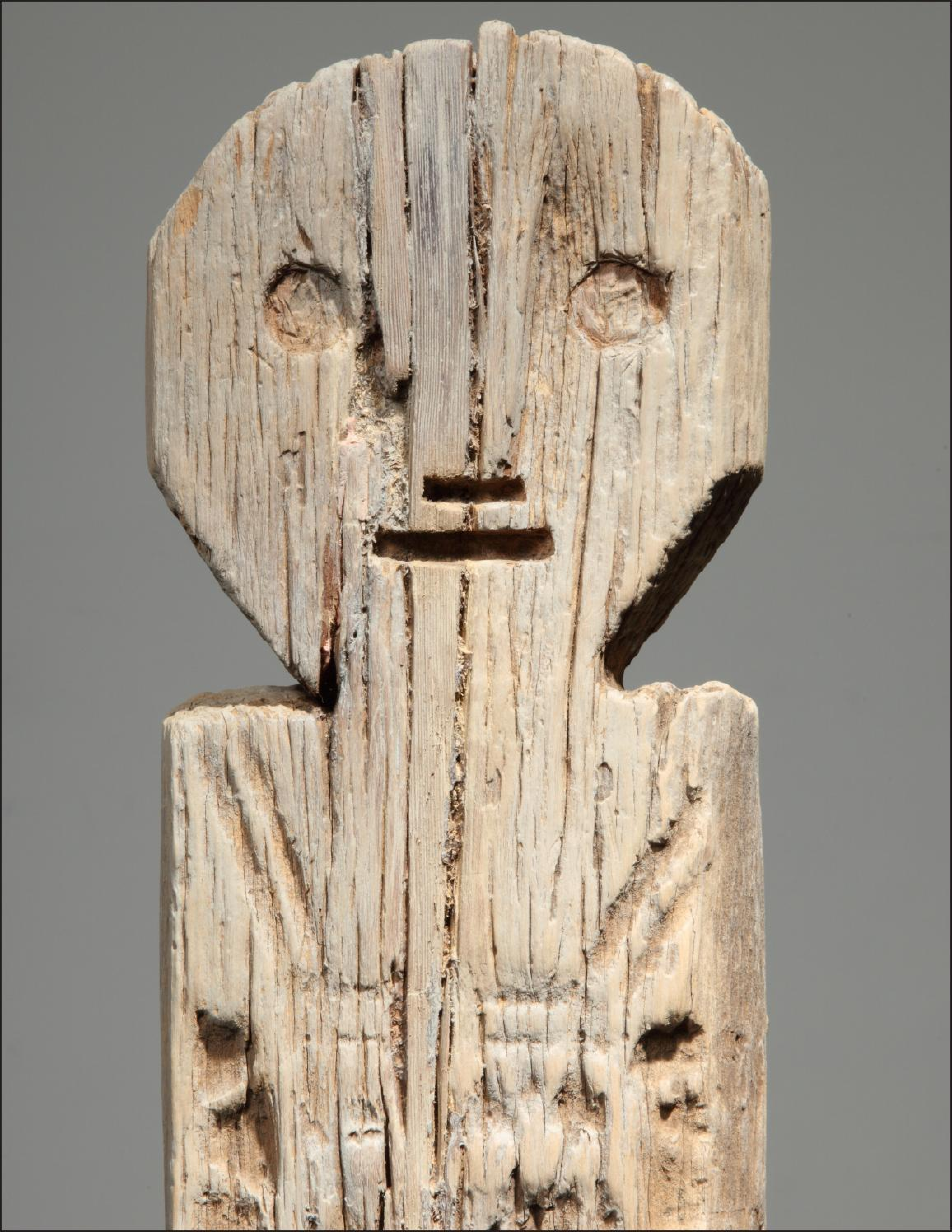
MIJIKENDA TRIBE VIGANGO 5 | 19TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 77 x 5 x 2 Inches

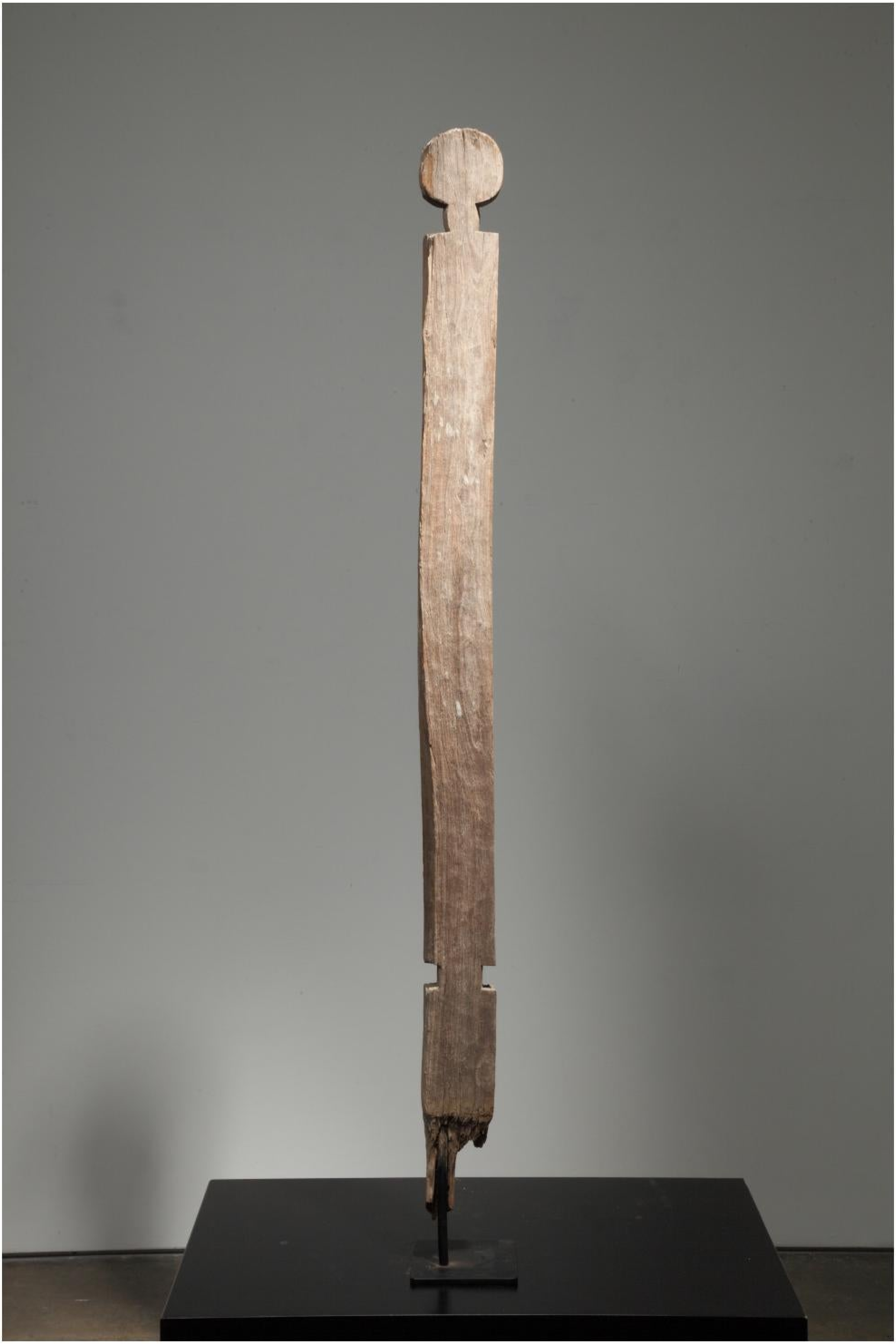


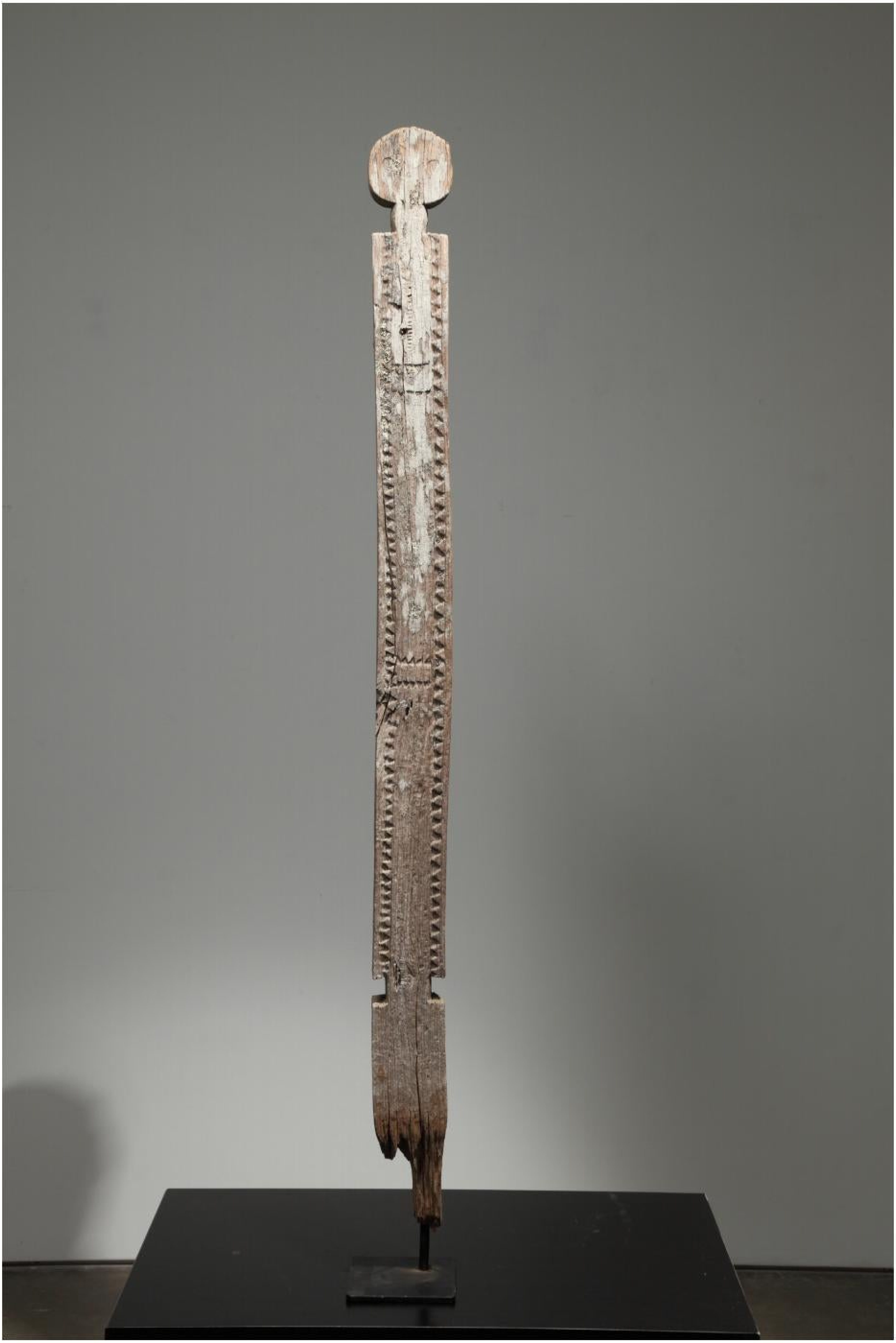


MIJIKENDA TRIBE VIGANGO 6 | 19TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 75 x 5 x 2 Inches

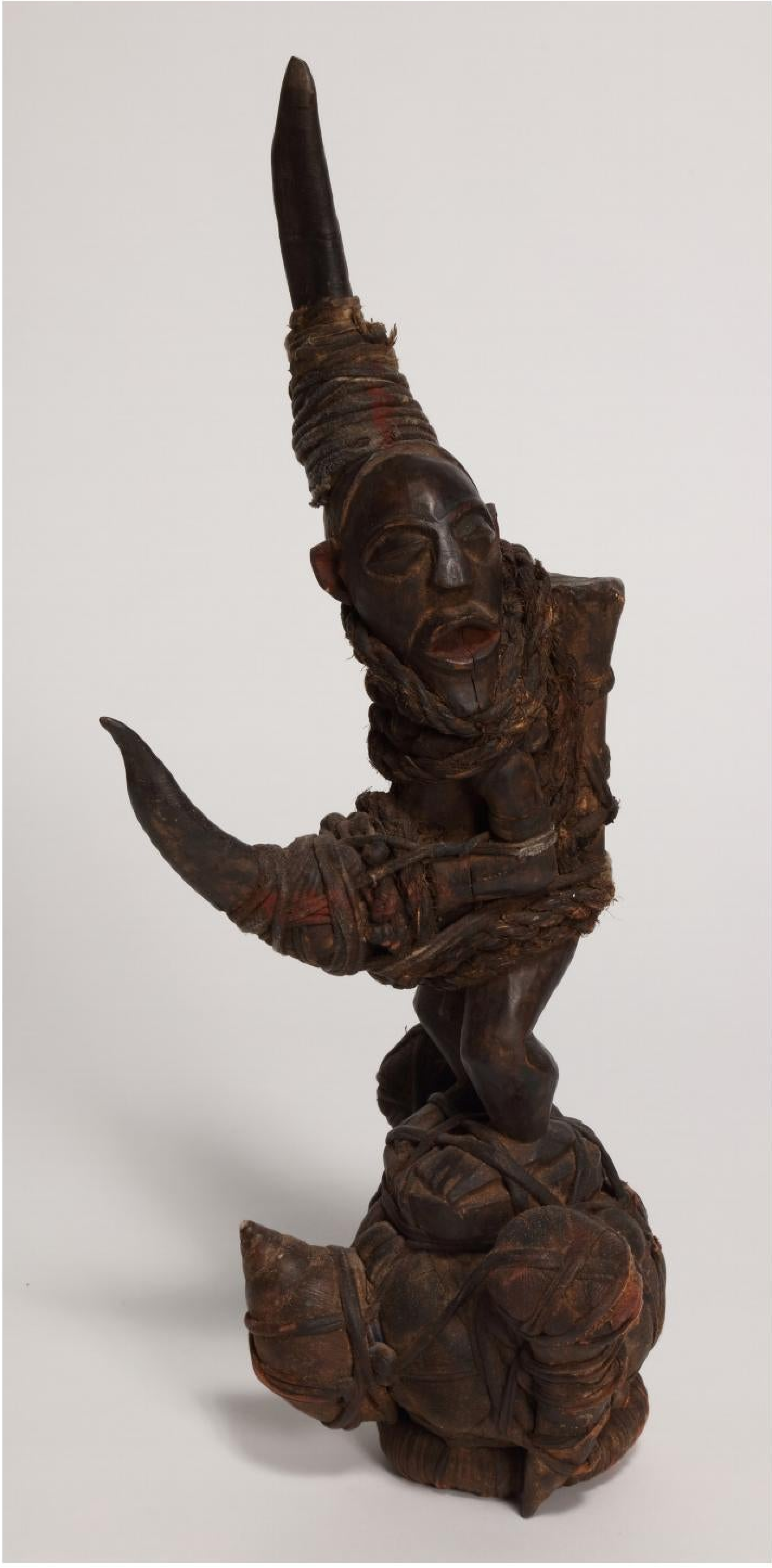








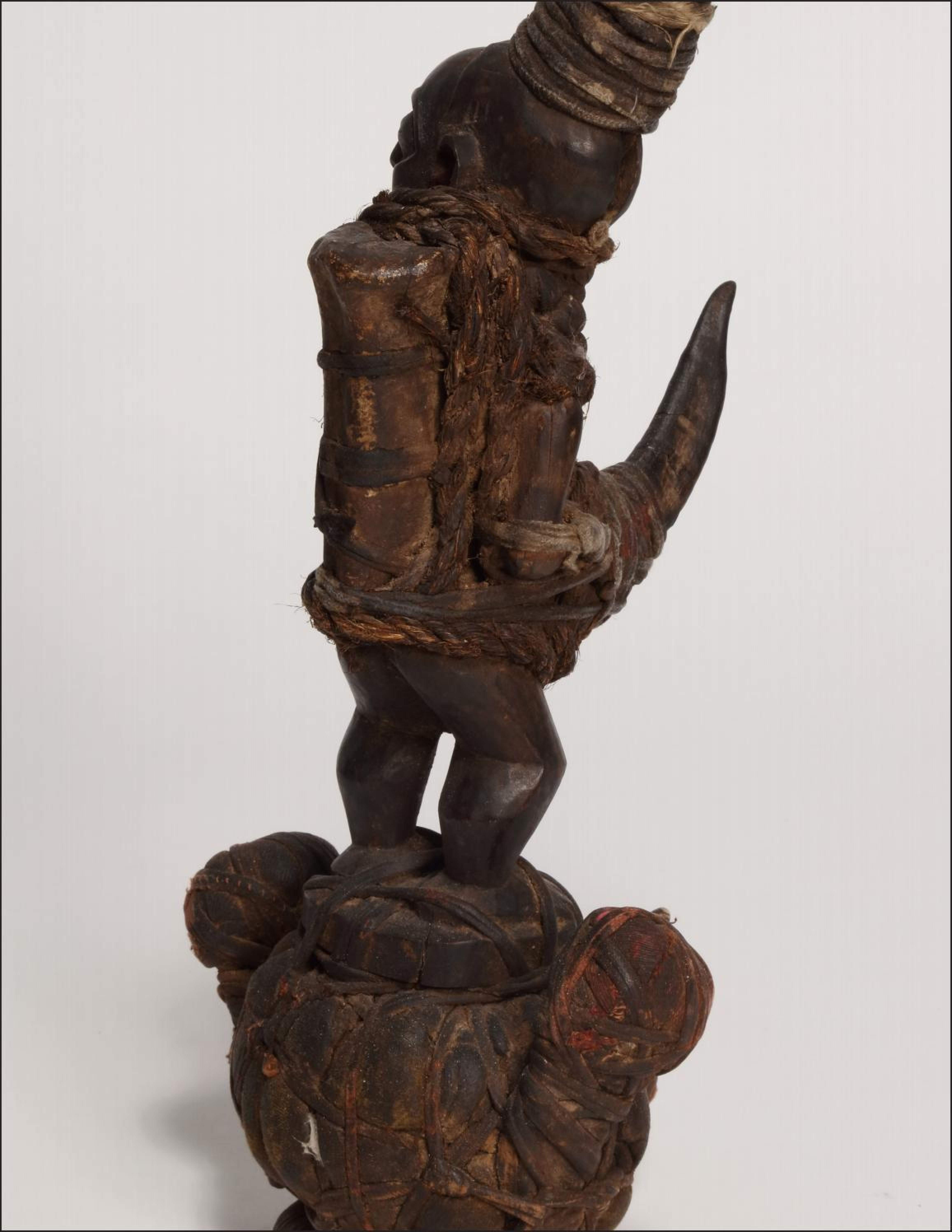
MIJIKENDA TRIBE VIGANGO 7 | 19TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 74 x 5 x 2 Inches

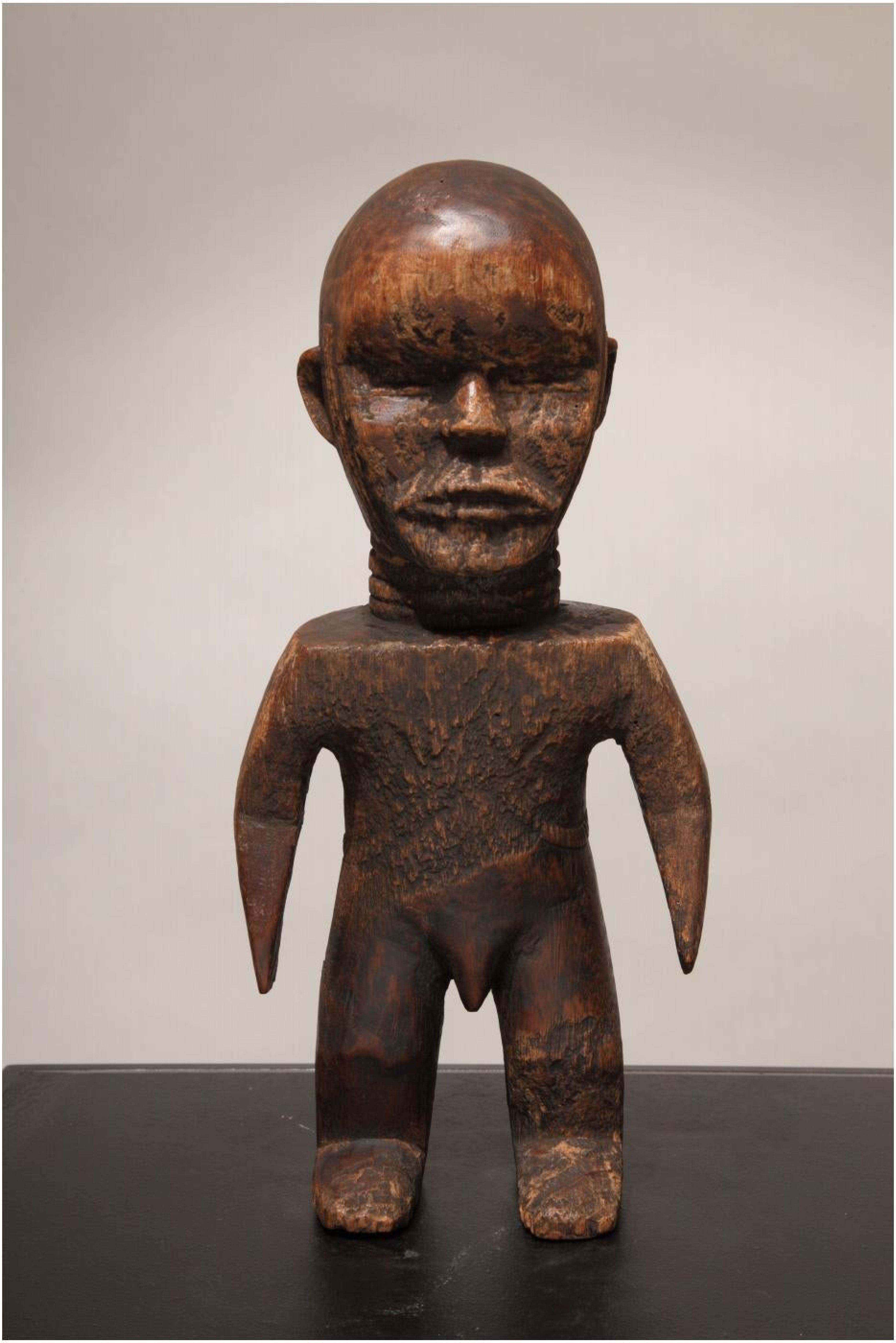


The arts of the Yoruba are as numerous as their deities, and many objects are placed on shrines to honor the gods and the ancestors. Beautiful sculpture abounds in wood and brass and the occasional terracotta. Varied masking traditions have resulted in a great diversity of mask forms. Additional important arts include pottery, weaving, beadworking and metalsmithing.

The female figure wears an impressive conical crown. The object in her right hand is the handle of a fly whisk, and she wears a necklace of large coral beads. All of these are symbols of chieftaincy. Although female chiefs are rare, they do occur in many Yoruba towns. The highest ranking female chief is called Iyalode , or "mother of all." She represents the "collective interests of women before the king and in the councils of the senior chiefs, and has the authority to take disciplinary action against women who have seriously violated social or political conventions."

YORUBA FETISH | Wood And Leather | 19 x 6 x 6 Inches



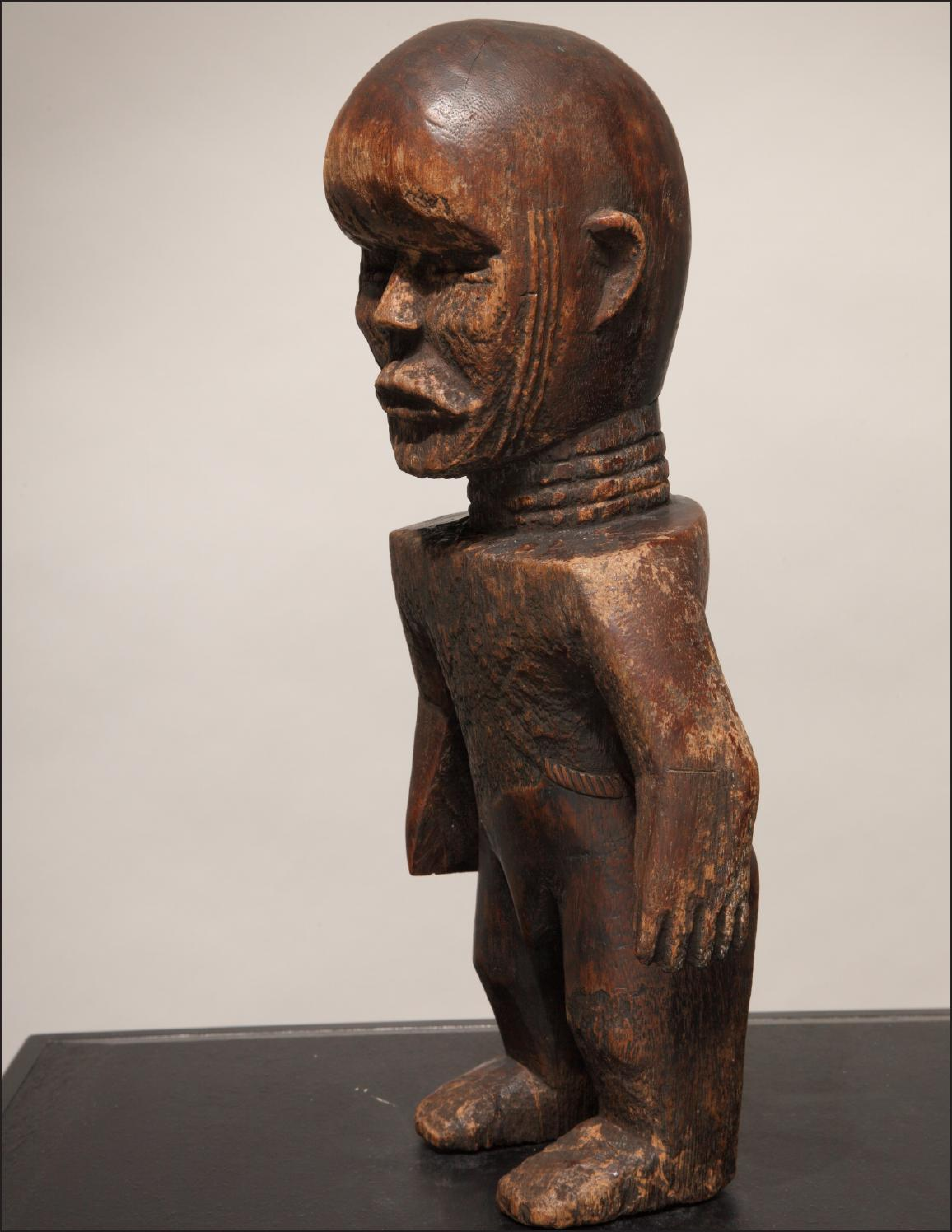


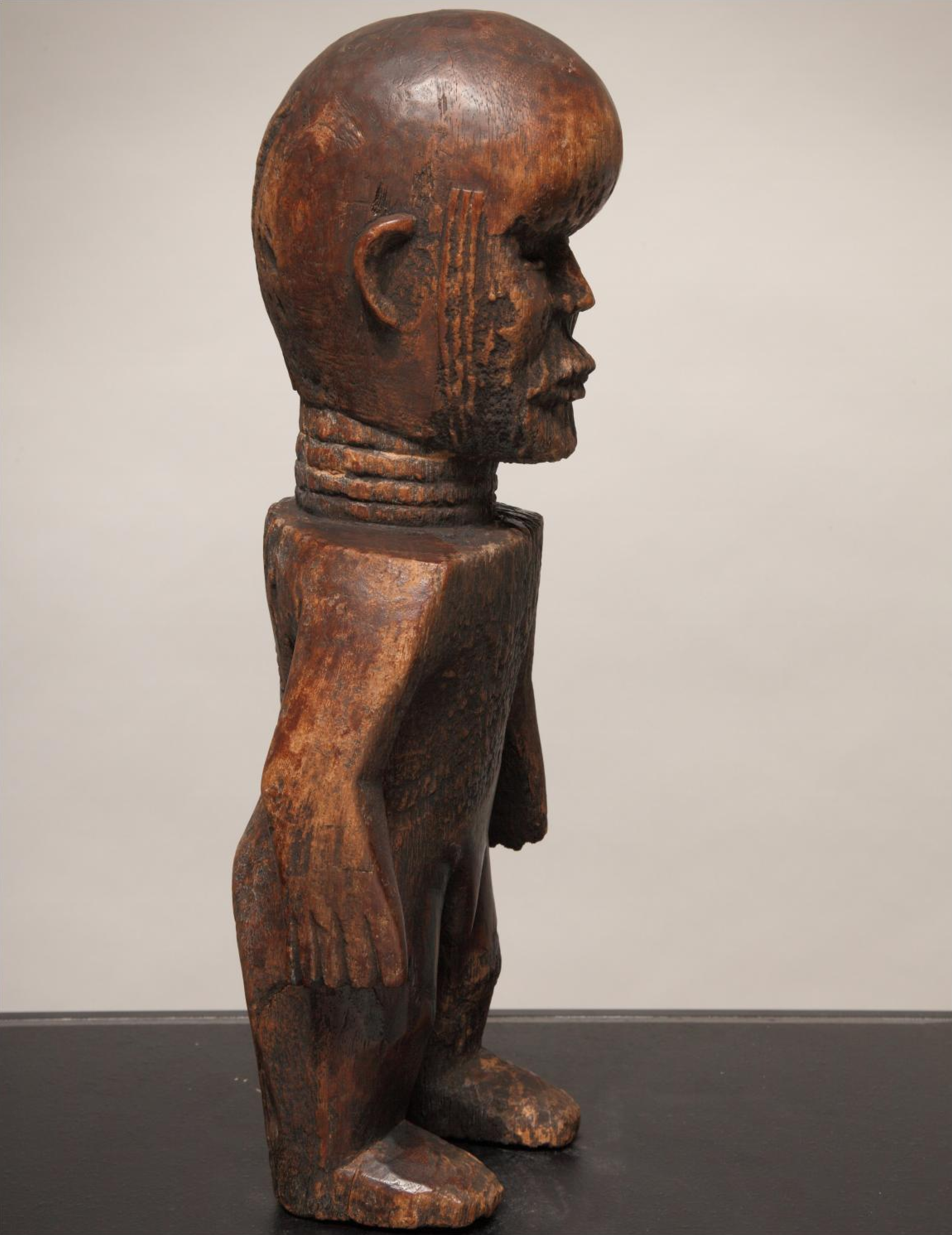
The Gio or Dan people is an ethnic group in north-eastern Liberia and in Cote d'Ivoire. There are approximately 350,000 members of the group, united by the Dan language, a Mande language. These are also known as the Yacuba. The Dan people live in politically non-centralized villages and towns ruling themselves through a complex arrangement of family lineages, men's secret societies, and various initiation ceremonies, known for their numerous wooden masks and masquerades. The Dan share many cultural features which includes a dynamic masking complex with their Mano and Gio neighbors in Liberia and the We or Guere and Wobe in Cote d'Ivoire.

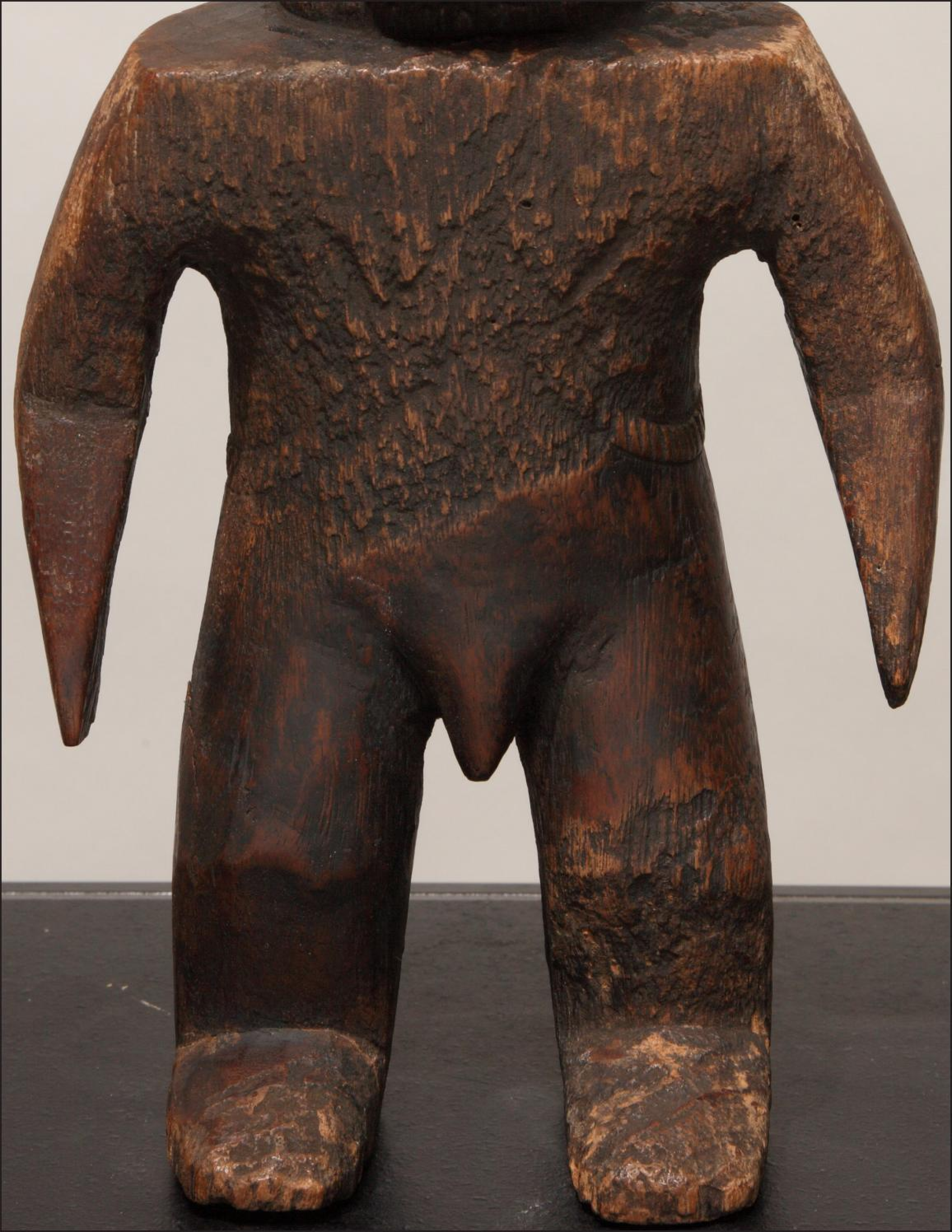
Sculpted figures such as this striking male figure among the Dan or Yacuba are uncommon among the Dan representing a male rather than the more common female lu me figures that were commissioned by wealthy or socially prominent men to represent their favored wife. Dan figures do not portray ancestors but are stylized portraits of real individuals closely representing the hairstyle, body markings, and physiognomy of the individual.

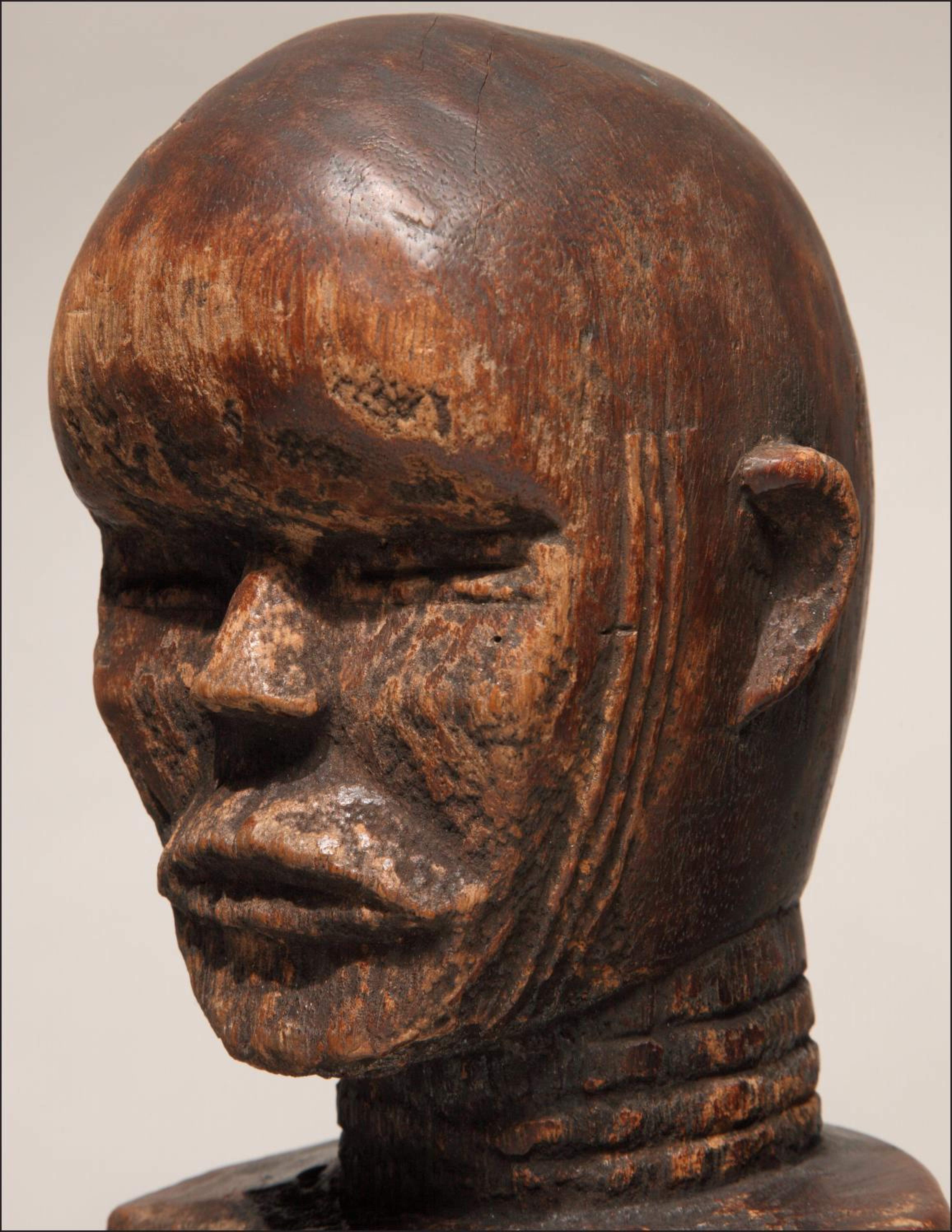
These sculptures are superb examples of Dan sculpture and were often the work of well-known artists who worked in secret away from women and children as they carved figures. Figures like this expressed status and prestige, both to the subjects, an ancestral family, and to the owners.

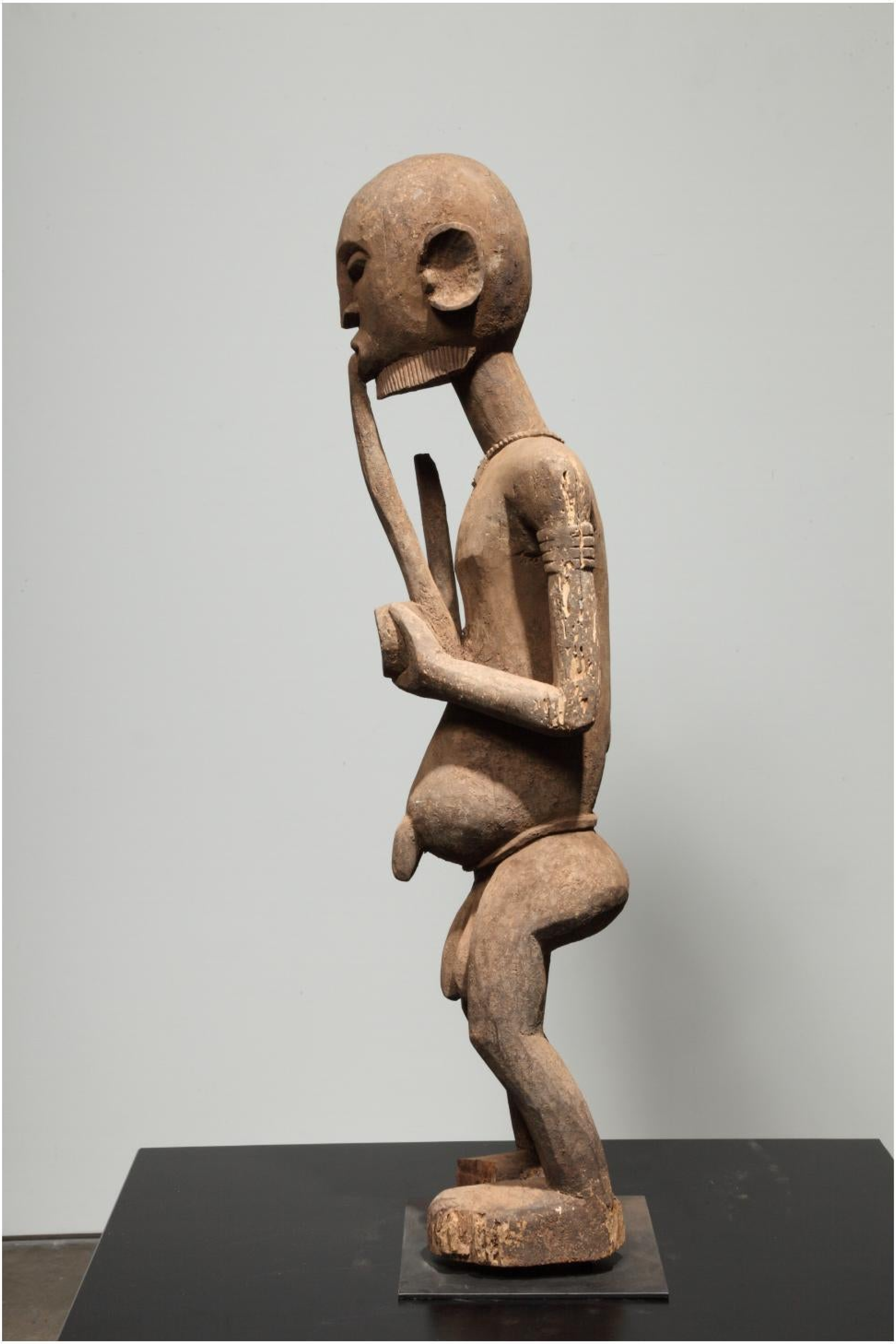
DAN TRIBE FETISH FIGURE | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 15 x 7 x 5 Inches

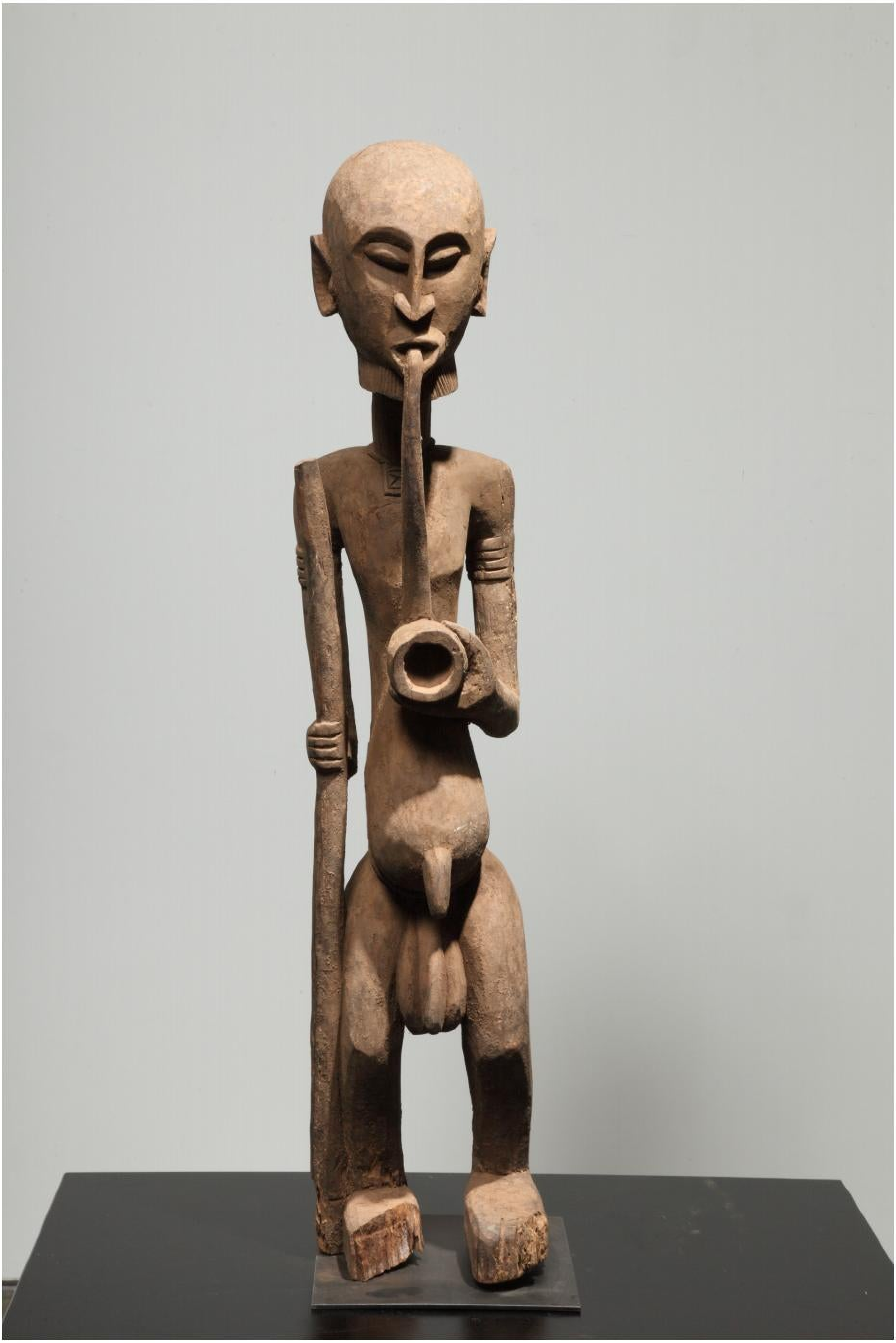




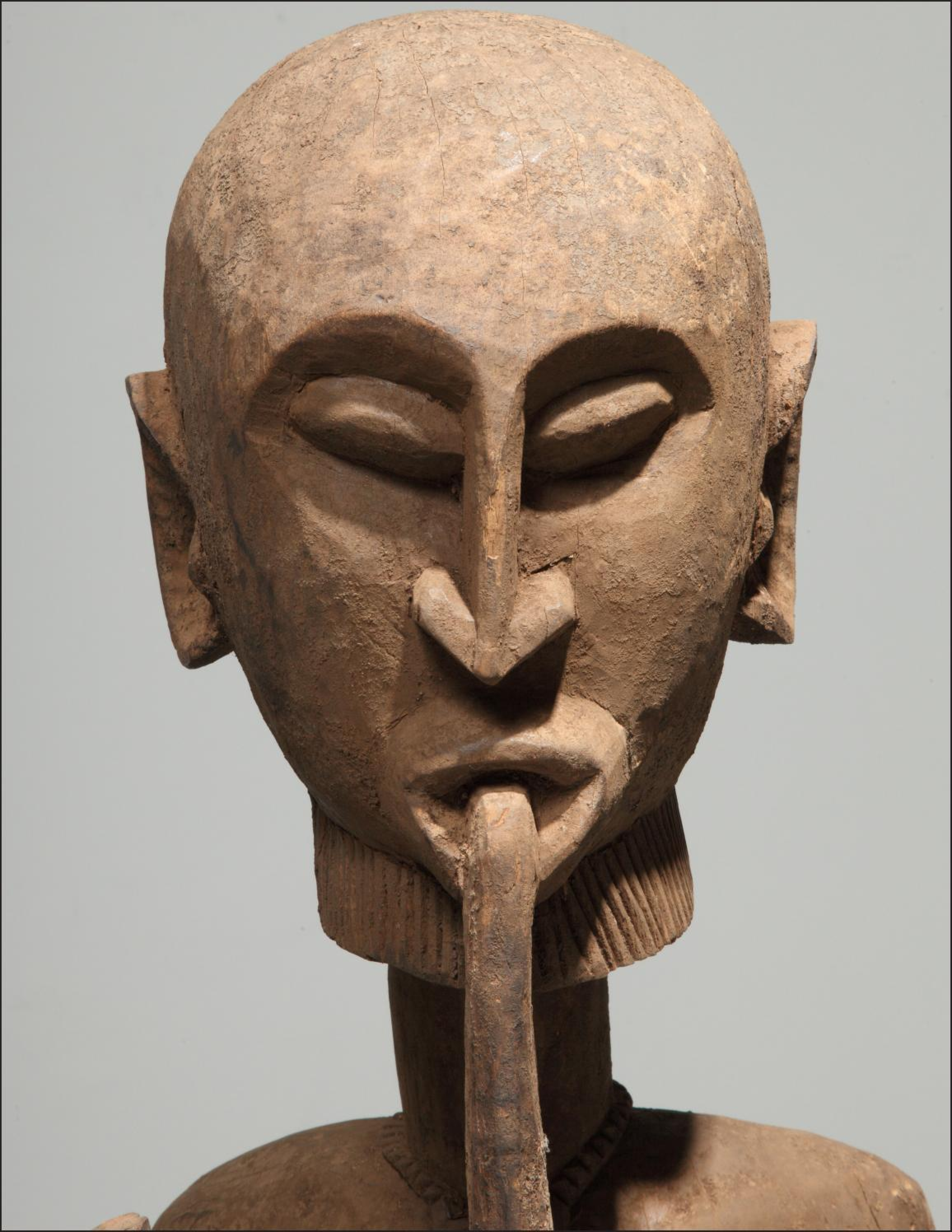








BENI STATUE | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 51 x 12 x 12 Inches

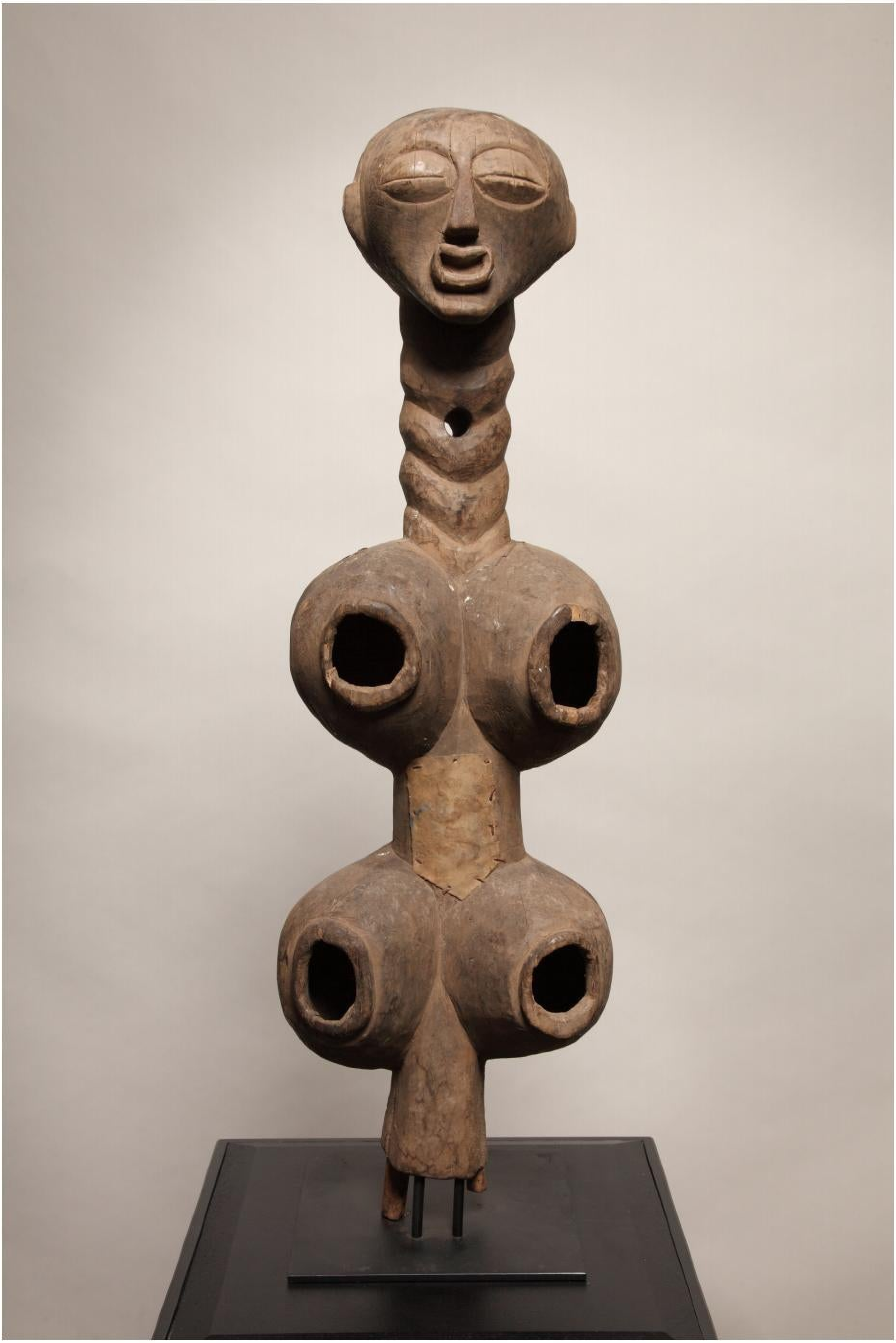


FANG BELLOWS

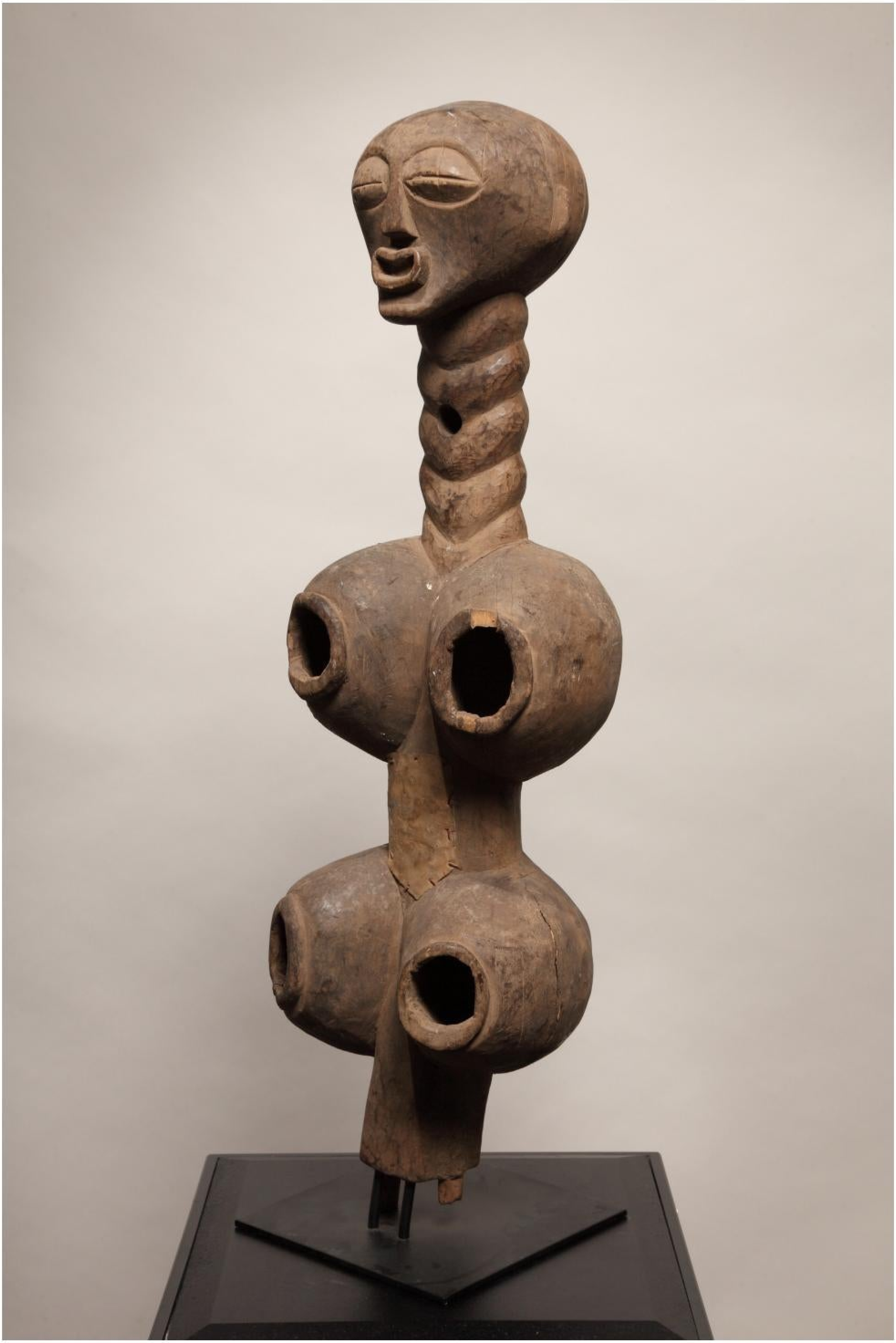
The Fang are perhaps the best-known tribal group in Africa in terms of visual arts. Indeed, so much attention has been paid to their astoundingly accomplished artistic oeuvre that comparatively little is known of their cultural and historical background. Their current territory is Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea, although they are known to have migrated to these areas over the past few centuries from their original heartland in the northeast. Their general métier is that of warriors, which partially explains, somewhat martial and fierce appearance of their figural works.

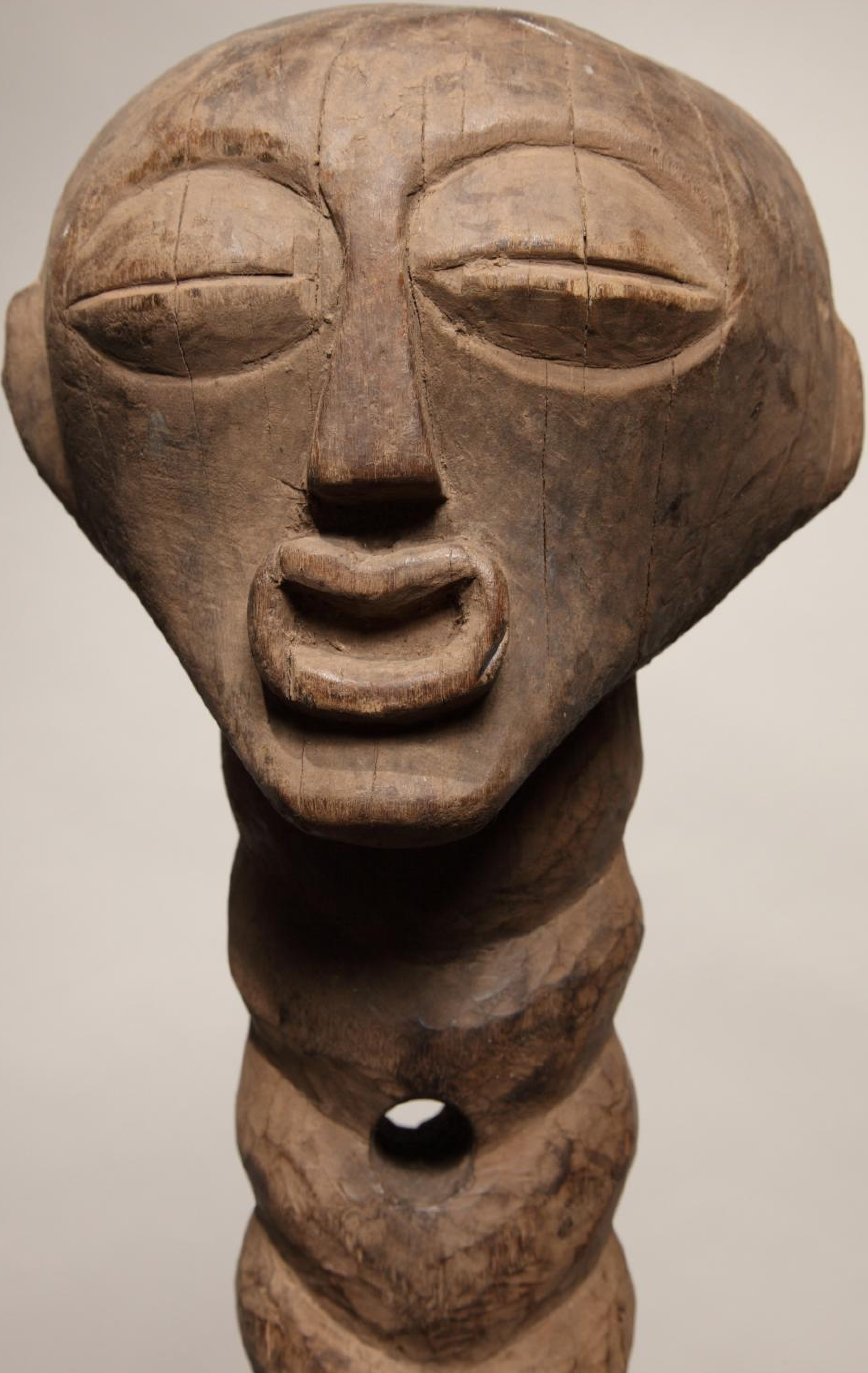
Their success at conquest means that they are spread over a very wide area, consequently leading to a proliferation of artistic substyles under a recognizable general style. They also intermarried with local tribes such as the Betsi, the Ntumu and the Ngumba, giving rise to yet further diversity of art styles. They are connected by similar belief systems, especially including a heavy reliance upon ancestor worship to validate their actions and protect them from evil; this preoccupation has transferred itself to their material culture.

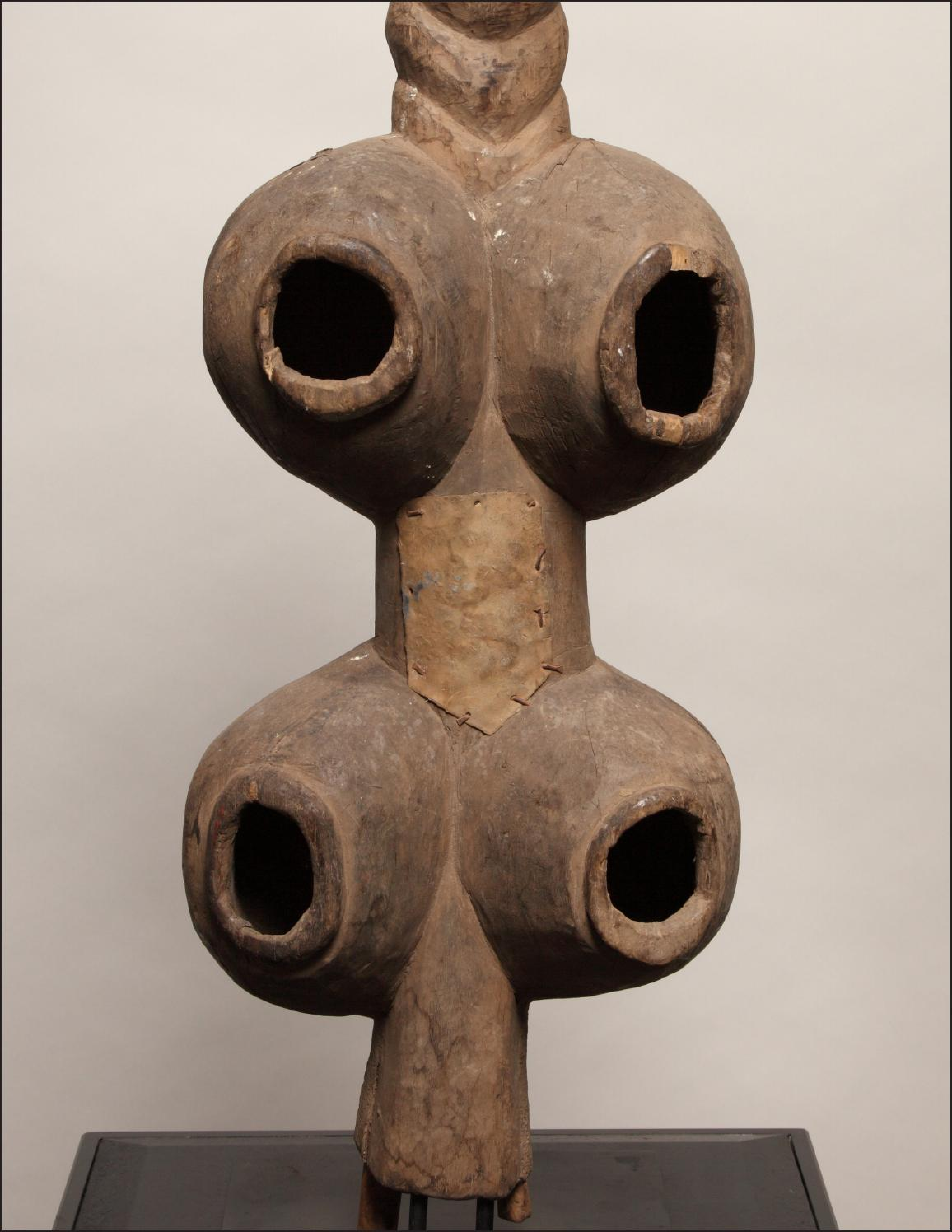
Fang ancestor worship means the retention of ancestors' remains inside specially made bark containers (reliquaries – nsekh byeri), which are protected by reliquary figures or heads known as "byeri". This system probably evolved because of the high level of mobility practiced by early Fang populations, and so that ancestors' remains could be continually present even during military campaigns. The spirits were appeased in a variety of ways, and were always kept close to the family whose ancestors they were. The figures were often decorated with copper and other materials, and many examples still exude the oils and other offerings with which they were endowed.

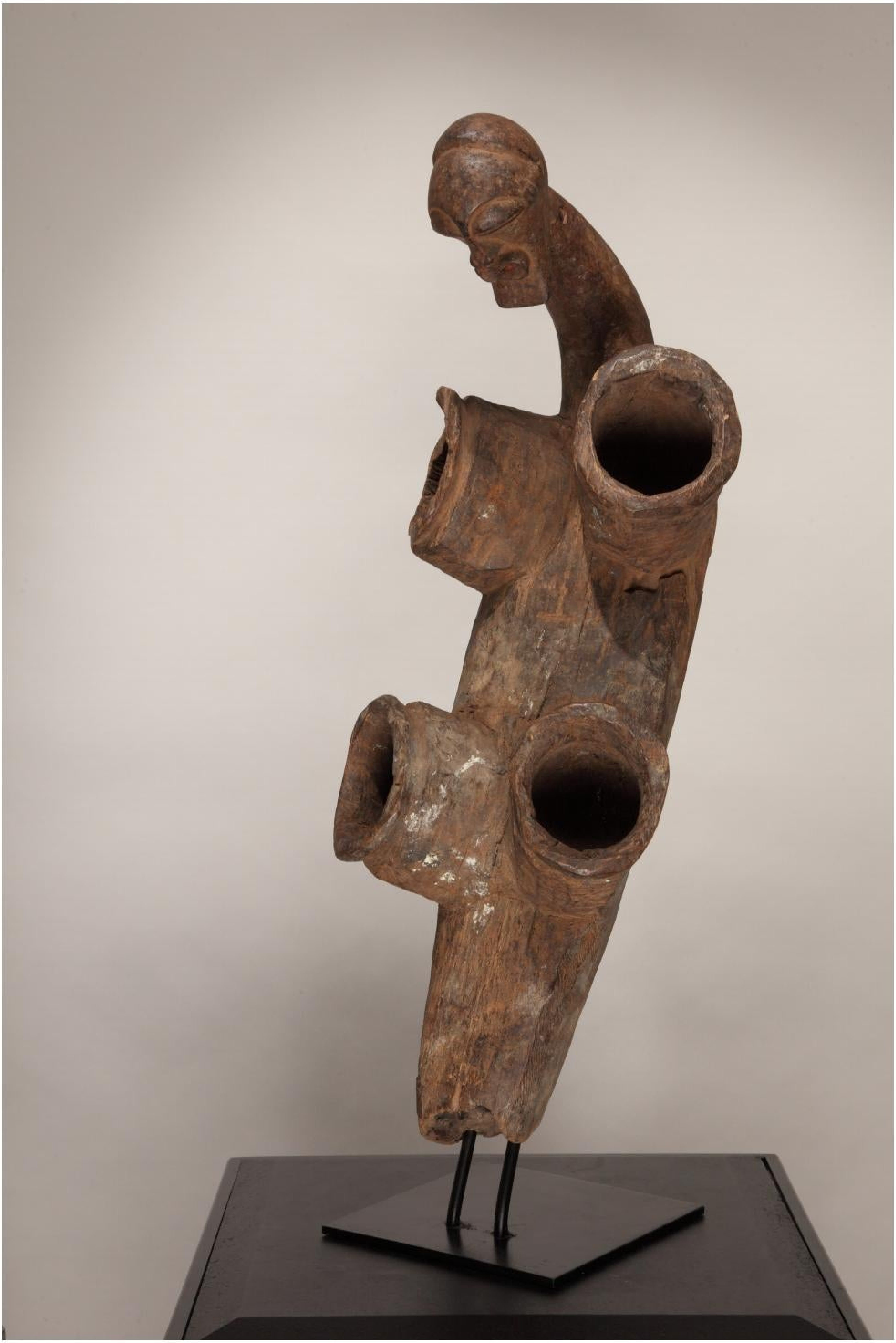


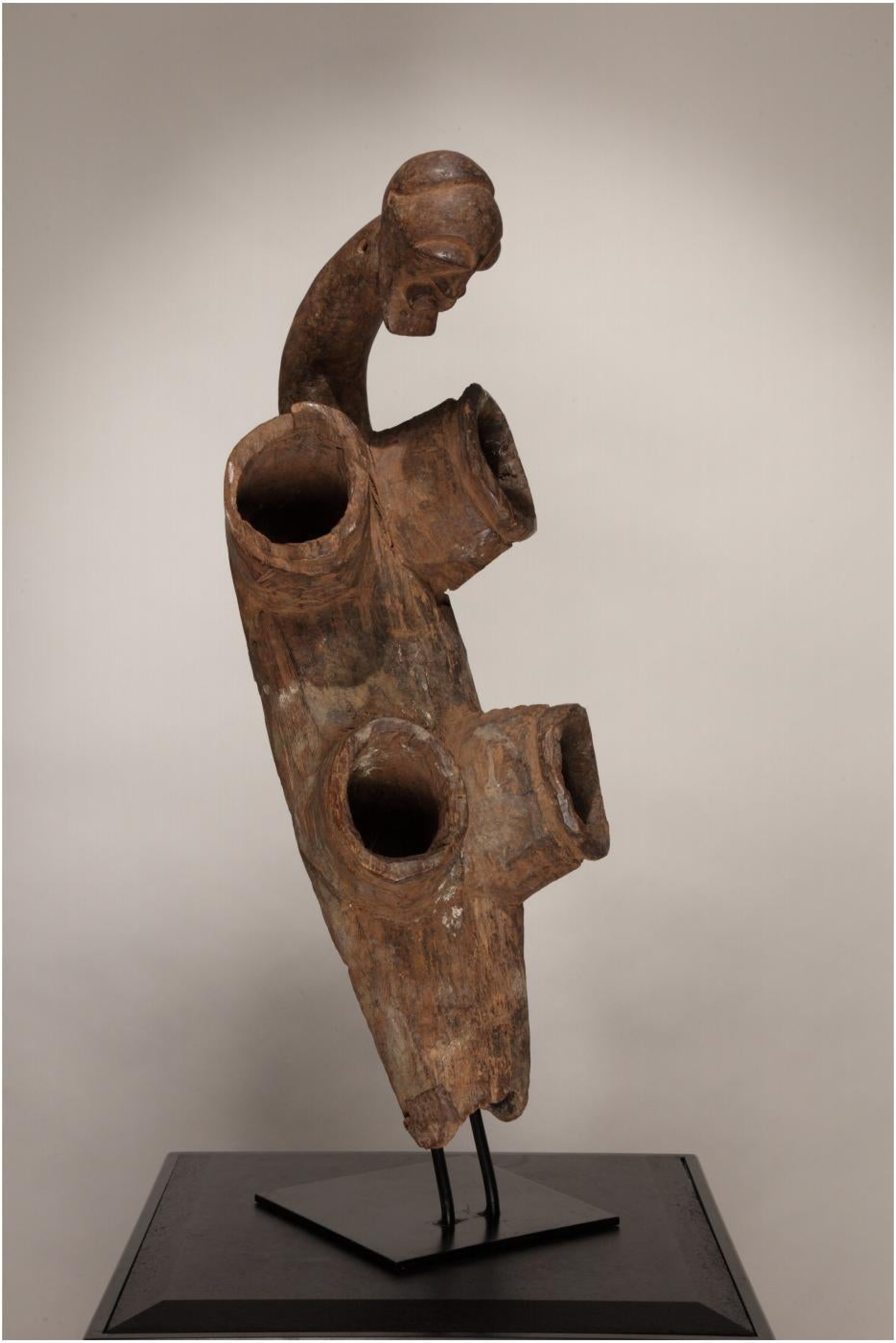
BAMILEKE BELLOWS SQUAD | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 38 x 11 x 7 Inches



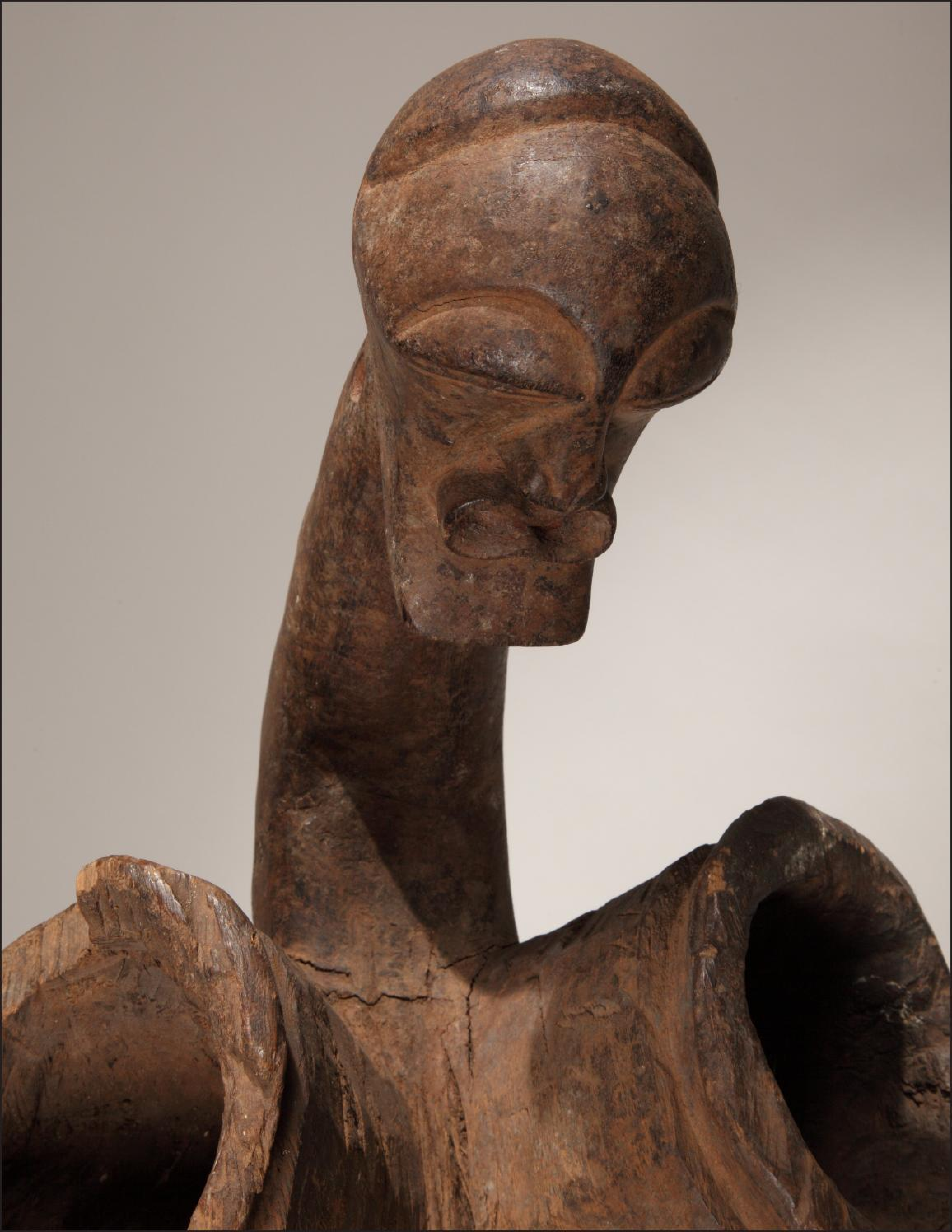


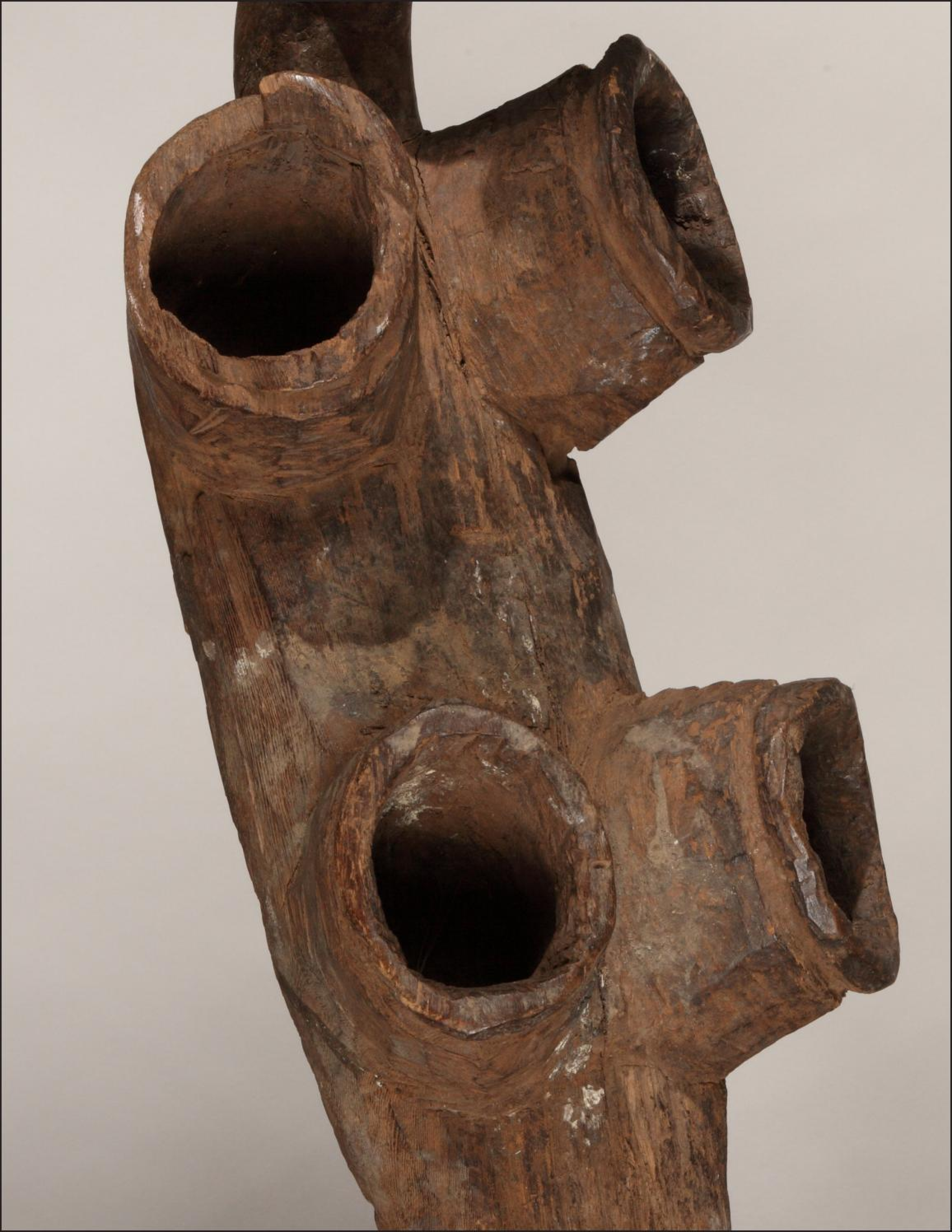


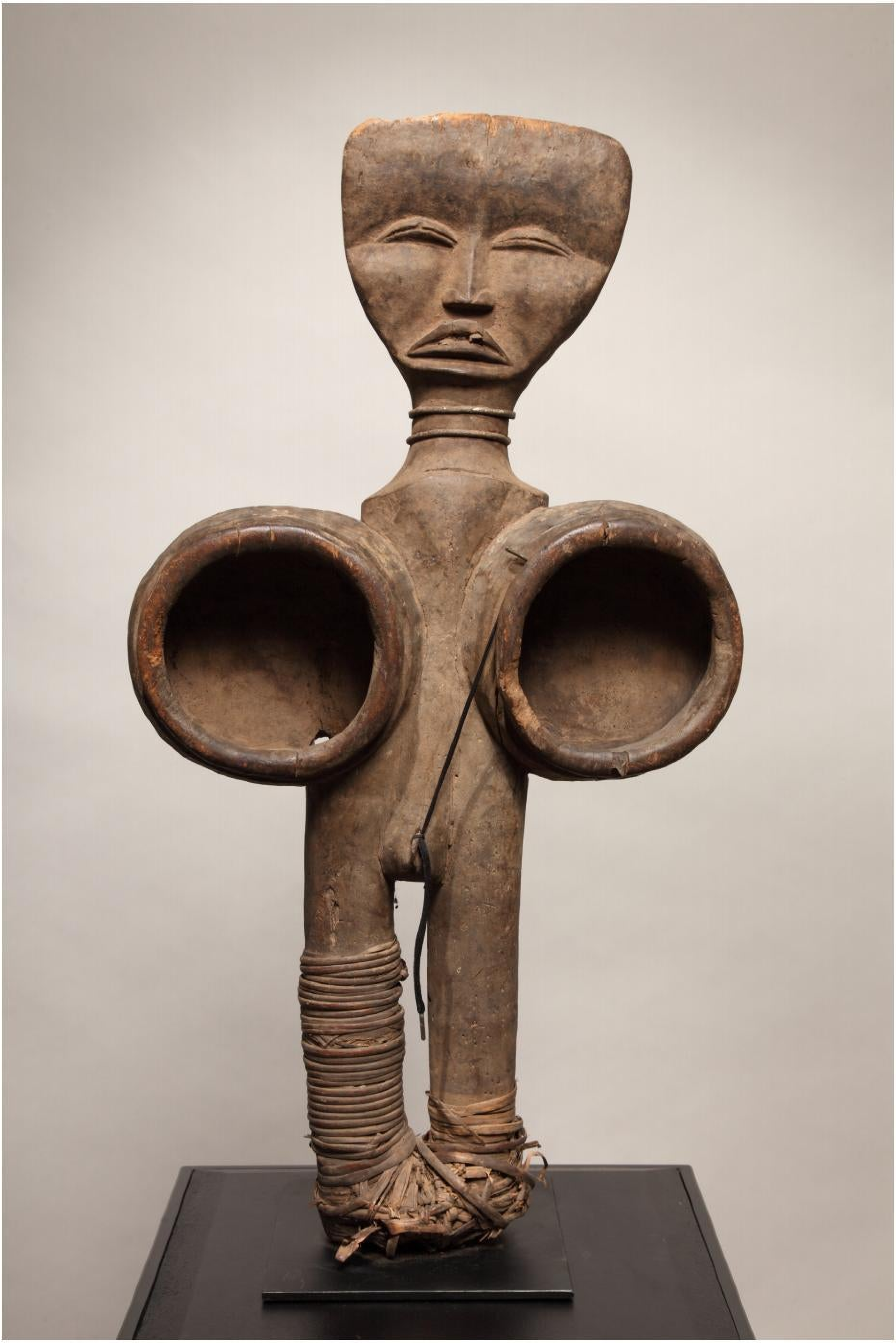




FANG BELLOWS SQUAD | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 32 x 11 x 12 Inches

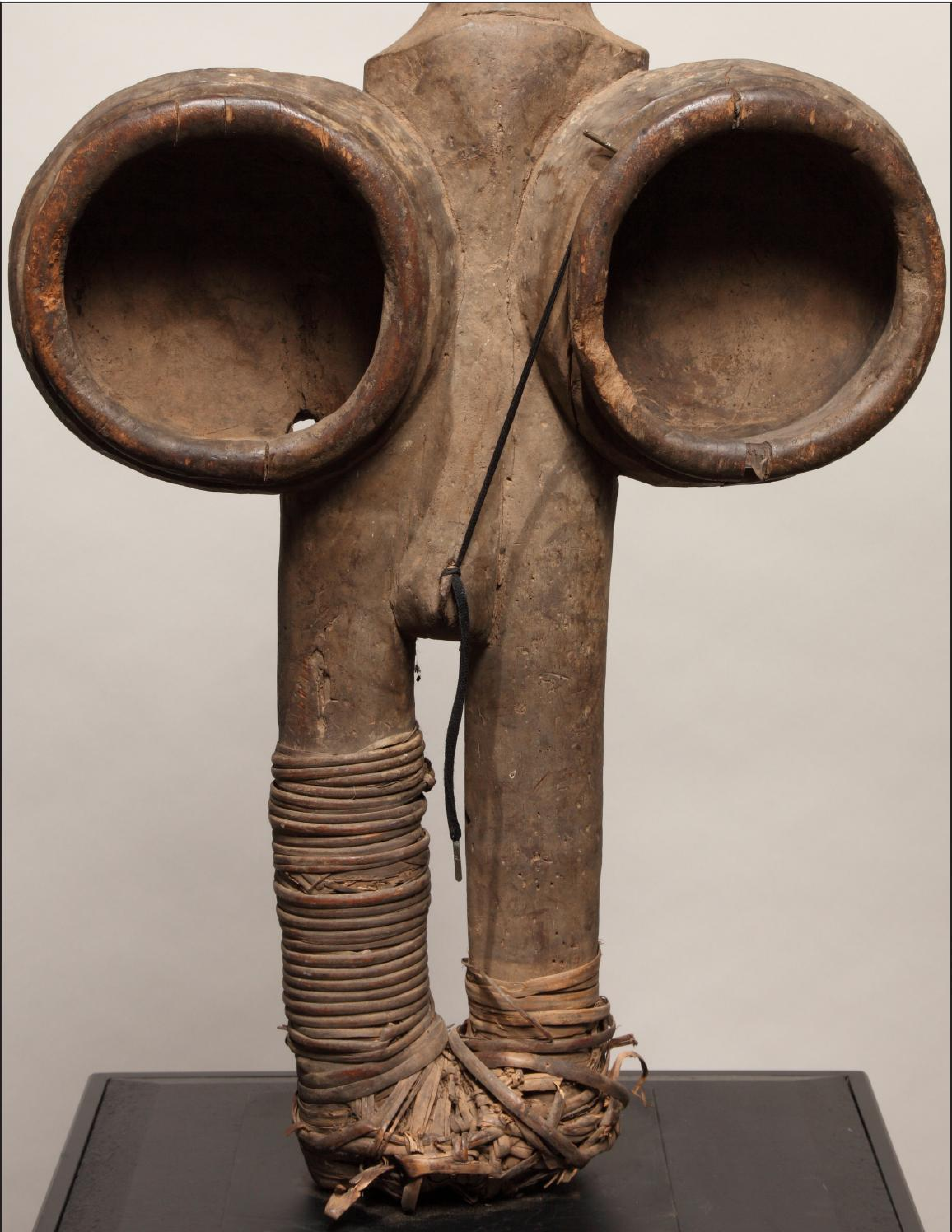


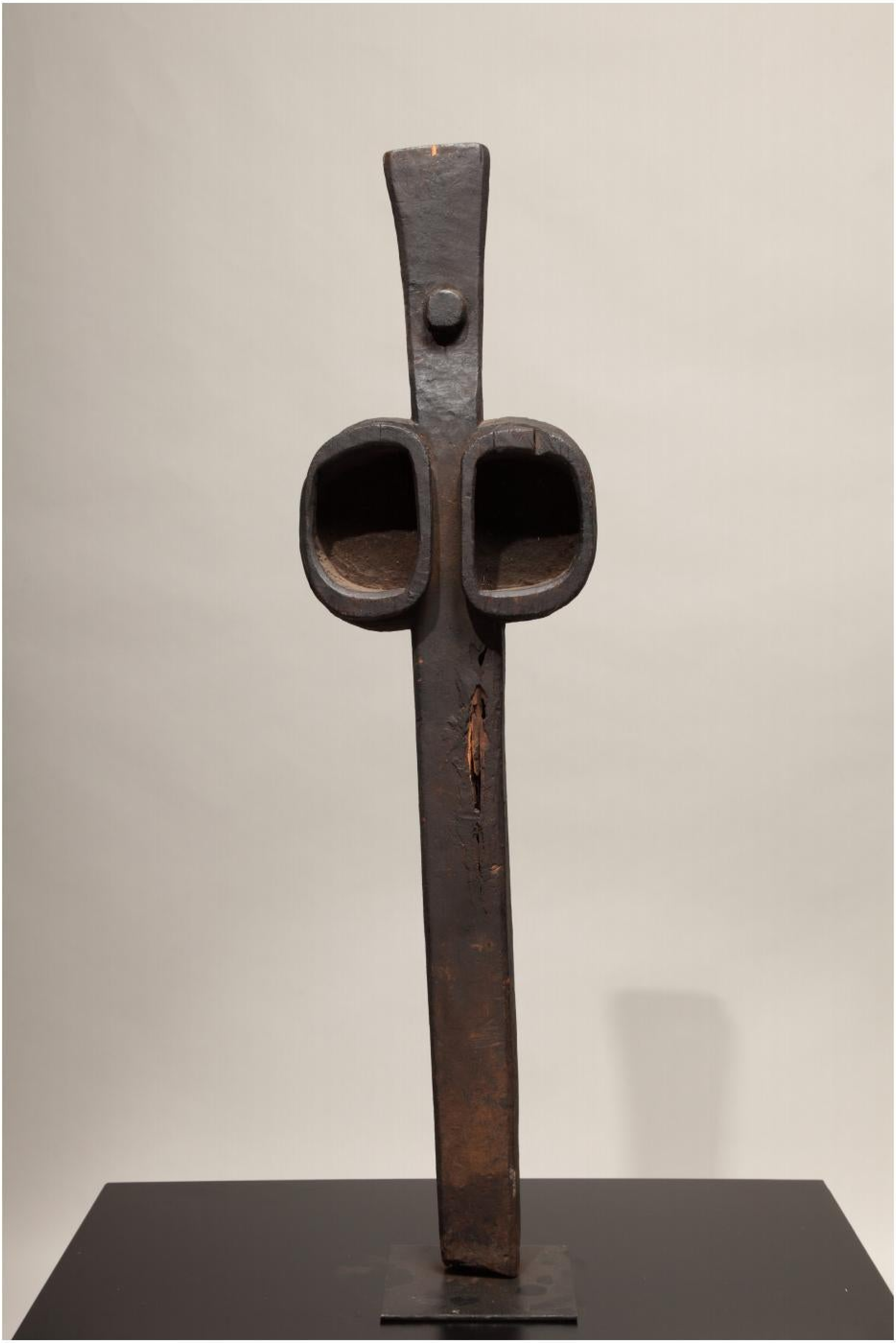




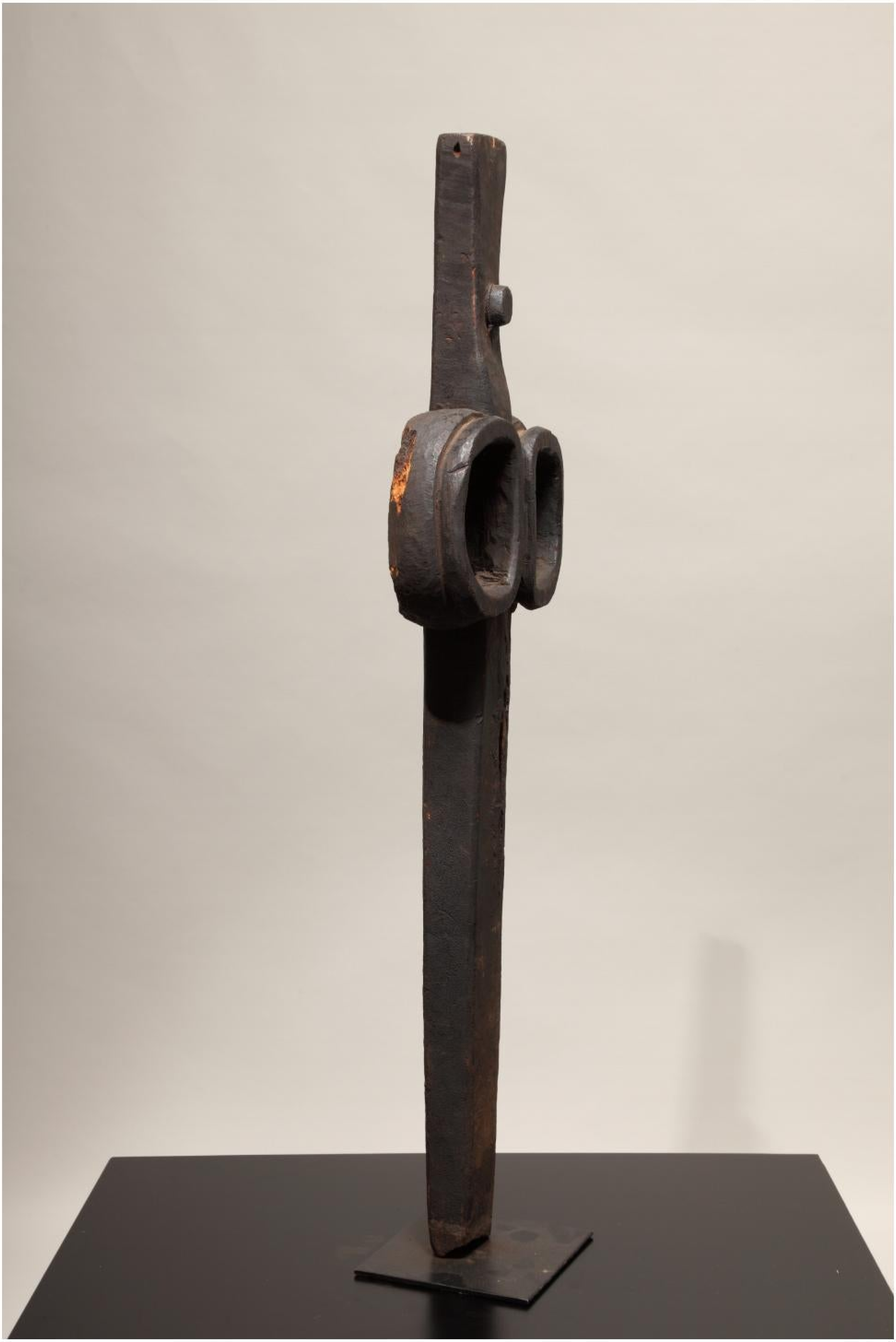
This intriguing object is the base-section of a set of bellows, made by the Fang people of Gabon and area. The functional sections of the tool – the leather bellows – were mounted on the circular discs with central pins. Air would have been forced down the central column and into a forge or fire. The finial of the handle, at the end of a long "neck" is rendered as an oval head with a pointed forehead, high arches brows, a triangular nose and a protuberant open mouth. The wood has acquired a good patina from usage and handling.

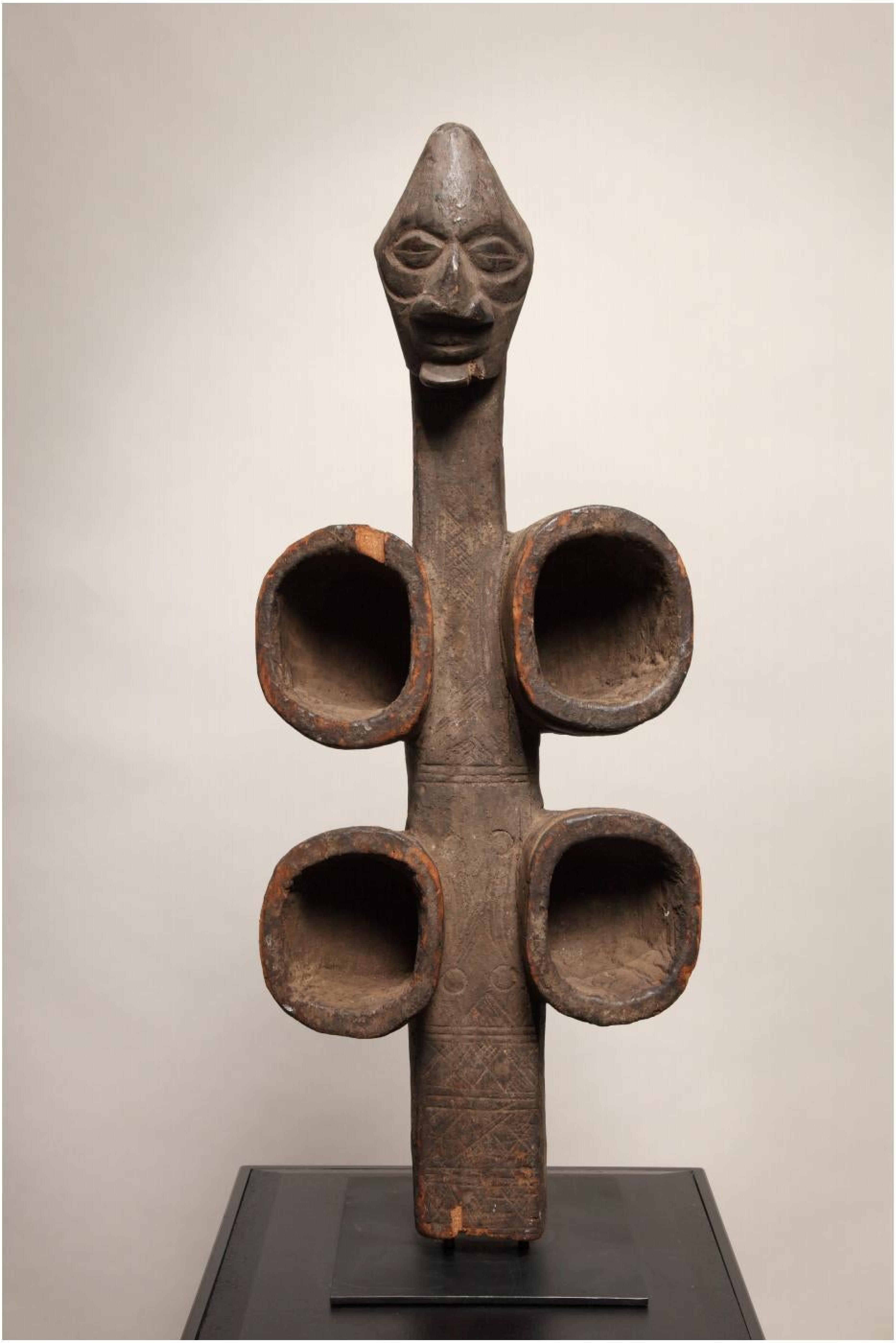
BAMILEKE BELLOWS DUAL | **EARLY 20TH CENTURY** | Wood | 38 x 11 x 7 Inches



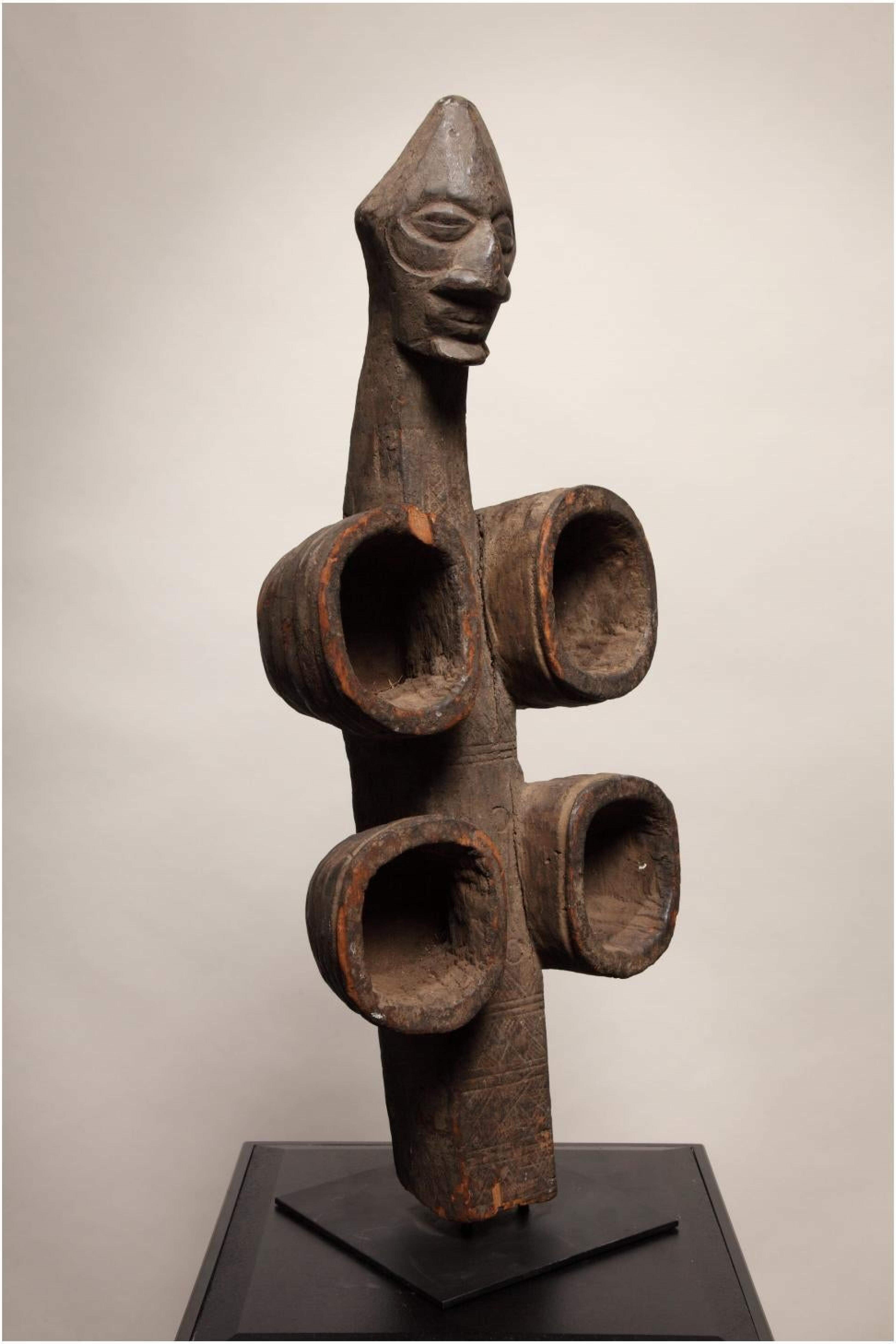


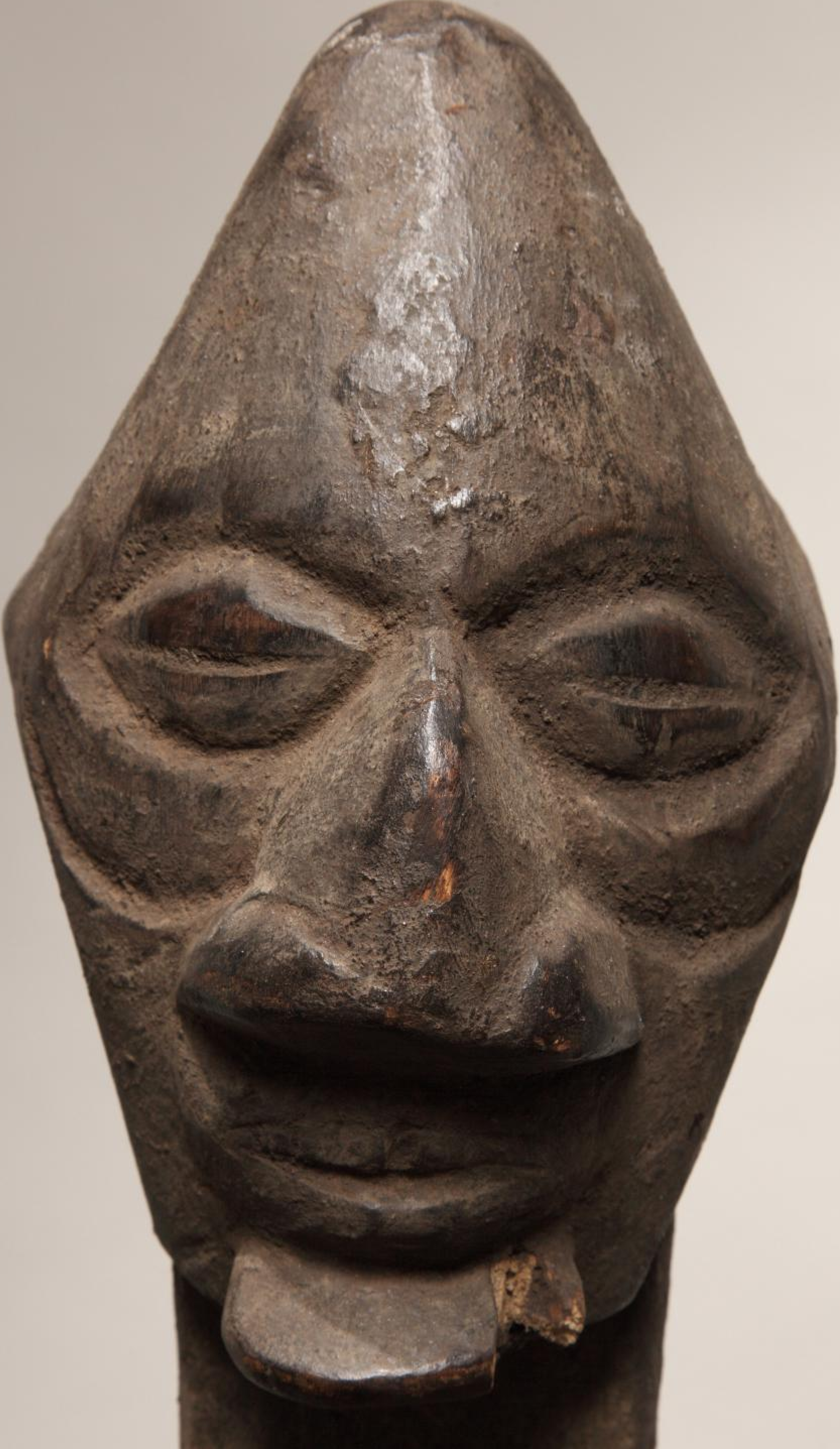
FANG BELLOWS SQUAD | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 54 x 19 x 9 Inches

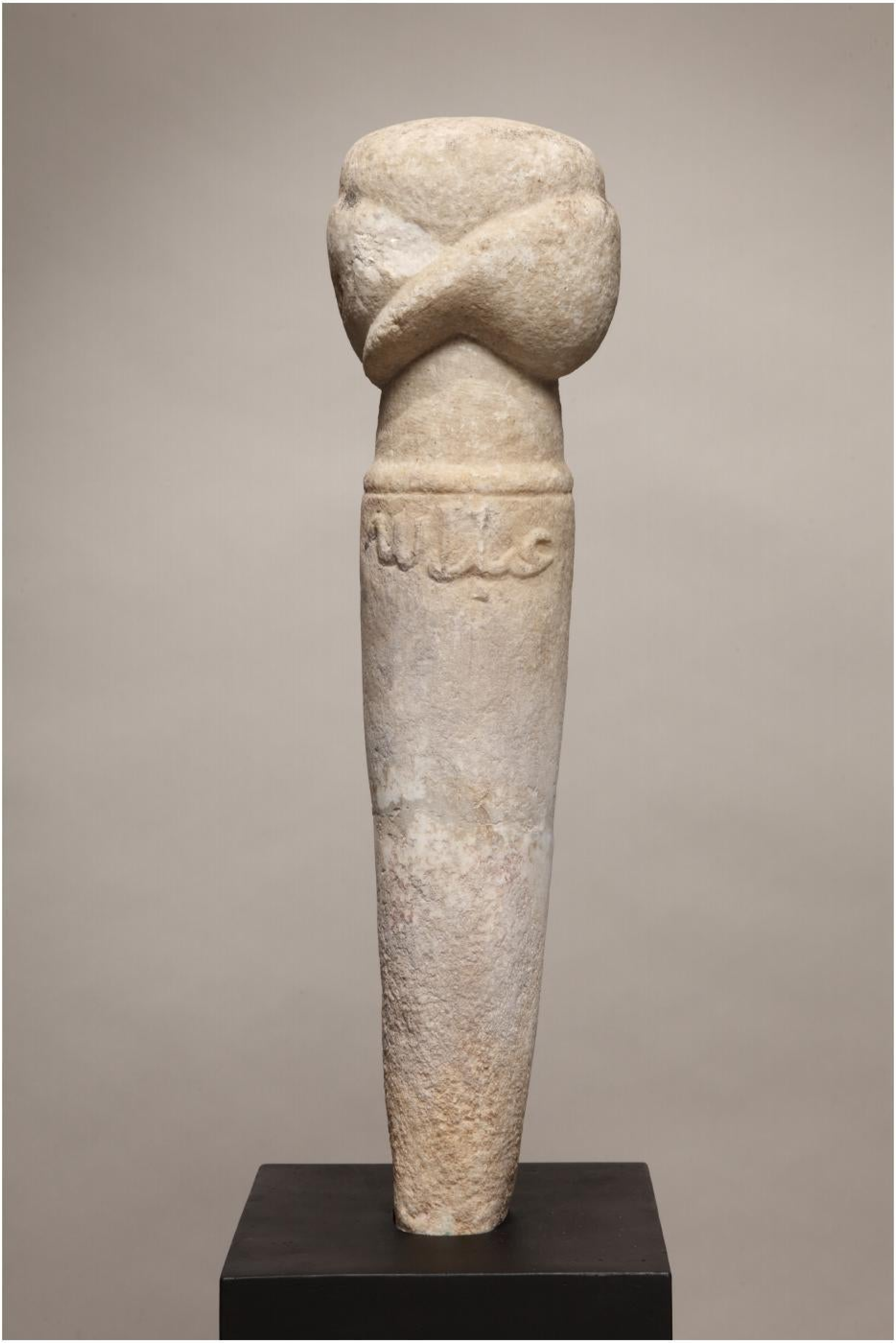




SONGYE BELLOWS SQUAD | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 38 x 15 x 7 Inches

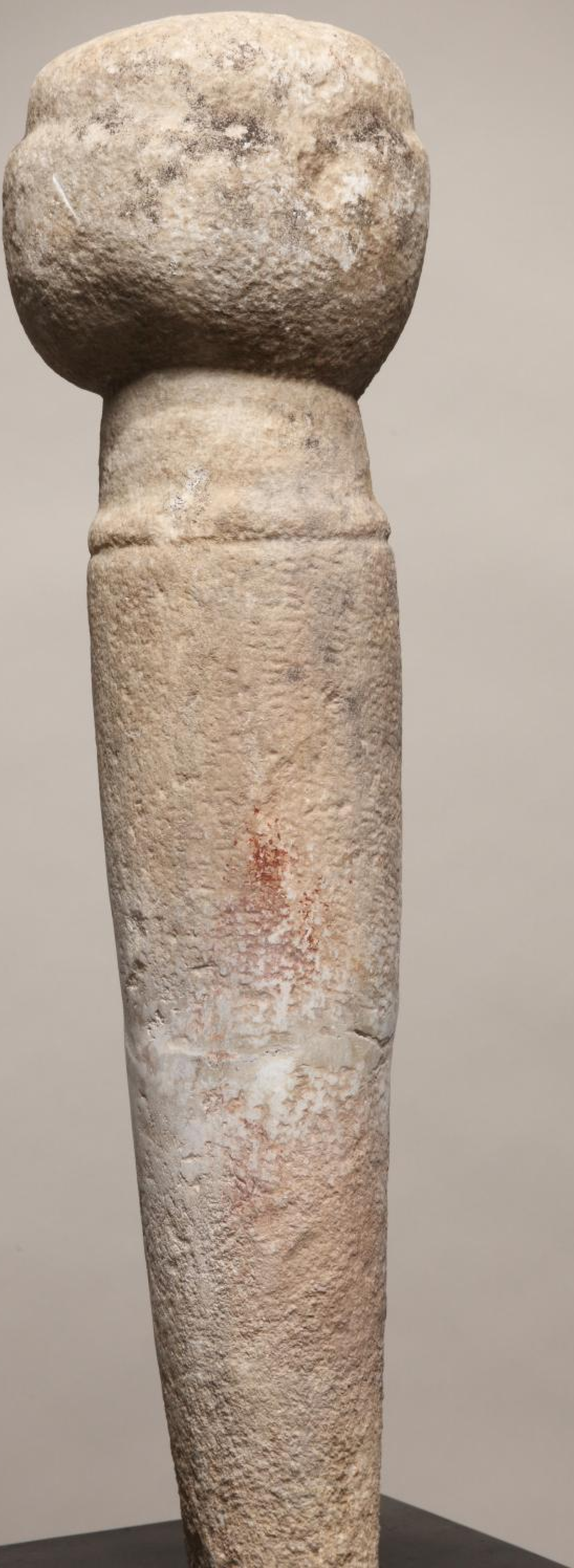


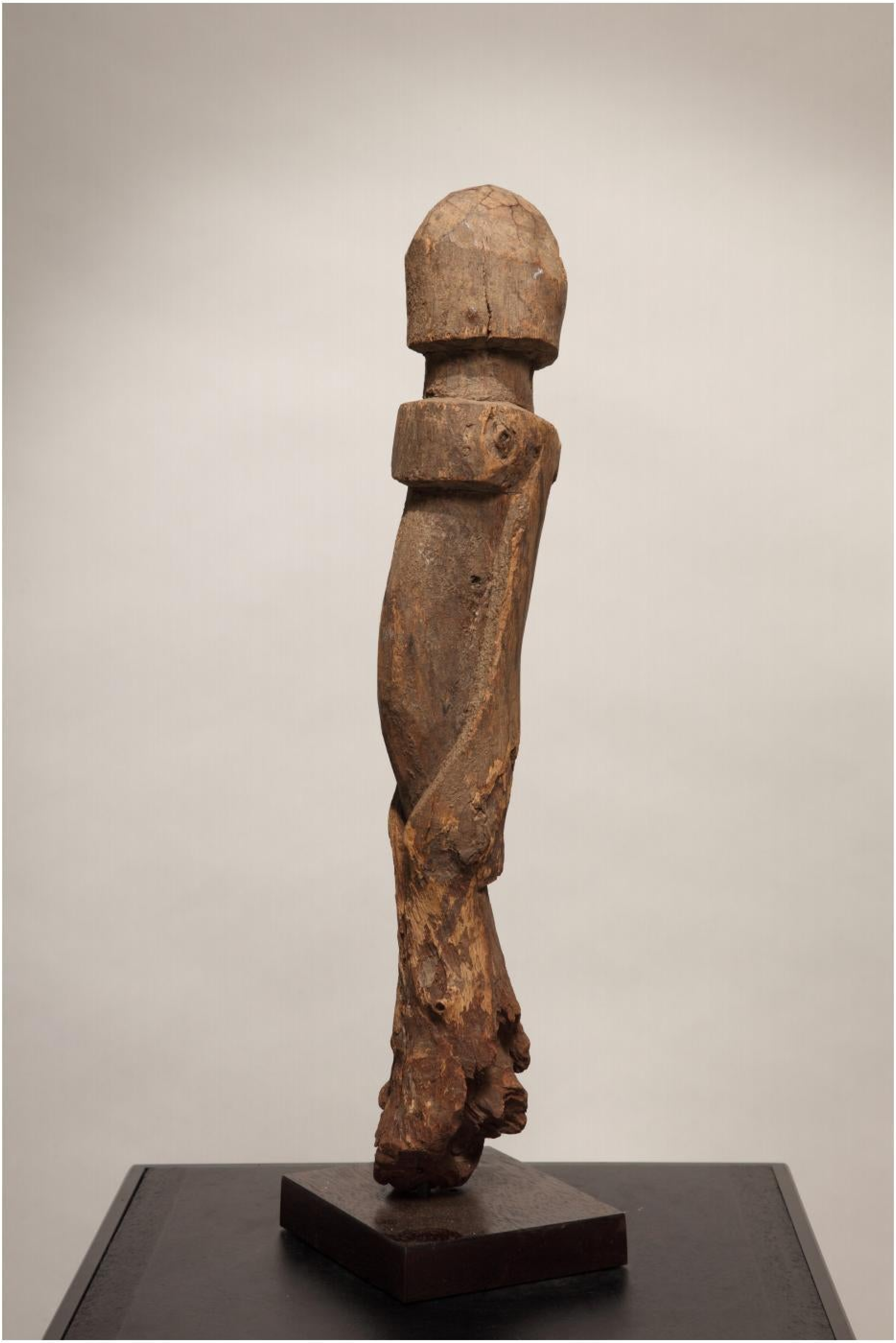




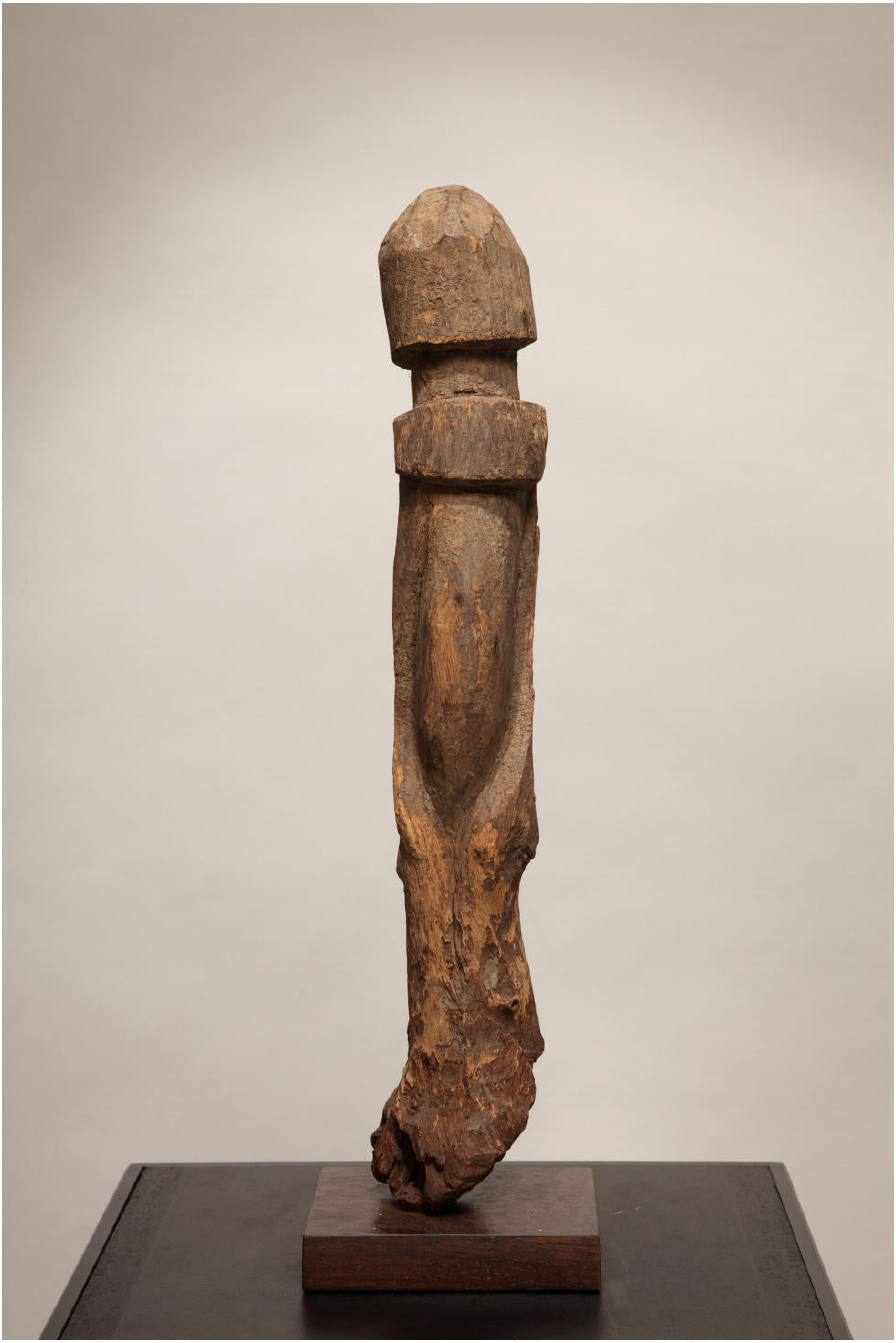
In 317 (or 307) B.C. Demetrios of Phaleron created a law against elaborate grave monument and funerary displays. From that time on, the most common grave markers were small columns like this ("kioniskoi" in Greek or "columellae" in Latin). The have a distinct ban near the top, below which would be inscribed the name of the deceased.

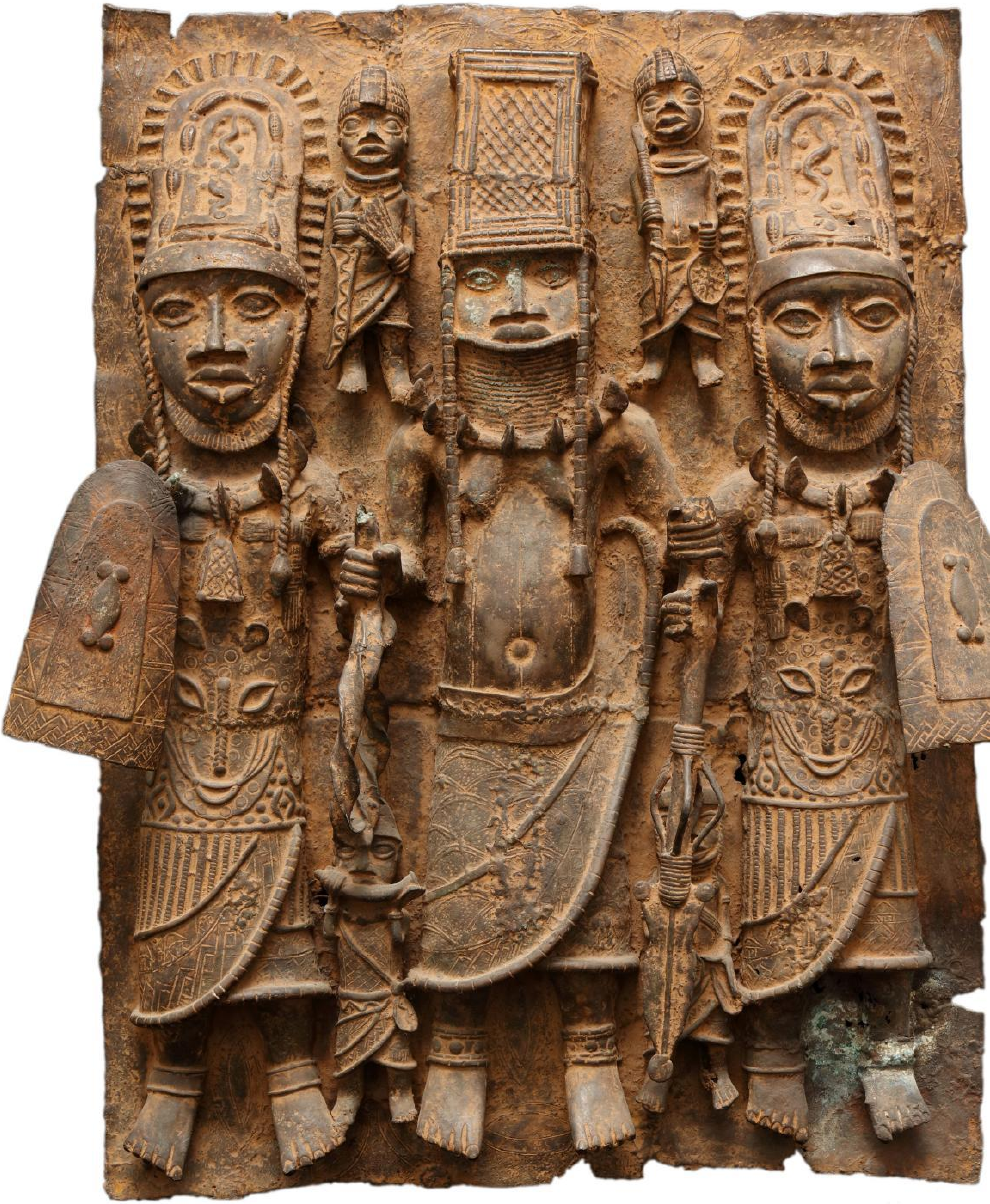
GRAVE MARKER | 16TH CENTURY (GREEK) | Carved Stone | 27 x 6 x 5 Inches





MOSSI STATUE | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 23 x 3 x 3 Inches





The ‘Benin Bronzes’ (made of brass and bronze) are a group of sculptures which include elaborately decorated cast plaques, commemorative heads, animal and human figures, items of royal regalia, and personal ornaments. They were created from at least the 16th century onwards in the West African Kingdom of Benin, by specialist guilds working for the royal court of the Oba (king) in Benin City. The Kingdom also supported guilds working in other materials such as ivory, leather, coral and wood, and the term ‘Benin Bronzes’ is sometimes used to refer to historic objects produced using these other materials.

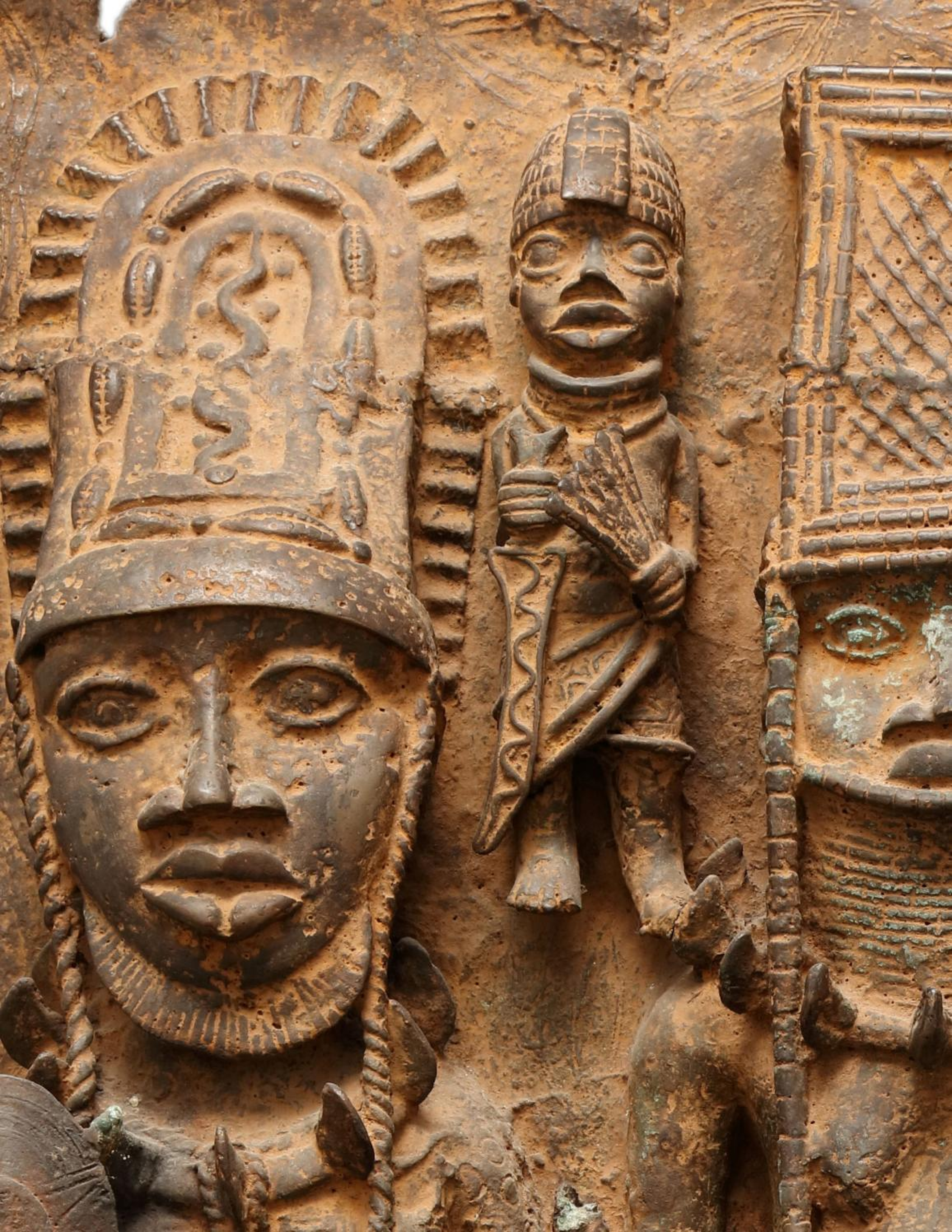
They were also used in other rituals to honor the ancestors and to validate the accession of a new Oba. A key element of the Benin Bronzes are the plaques which once decorated the Benin Royal Palace, and which provide an important historical record of the Kingdom of Benin. This includes dynastic history, as well as social history, and insights into its relationships with neighboring societies. The Benin Bronzes are preceded by earlier West African cast brass traditions, dating back into the medieval period.

The Benin Bronzes come from Benin City, the historic capital of the Kingdom of Benin, a major city state in West Africa from the medieval period. Benin became part of the British Empire from 1897 to 1960 and is now within the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Today the modern city of Benin (in Edo State) is the home of the current ruler of the Kingdom of Benin, His Royal Majesty Oba Ewuare II. Many of the rituals and ceremonies associated with the historic Kingdom of Benin continue to be performed today.

BENIN BRONZE RELIEF (PORTRAIT OF ROYAL FAMILY) | CIRCA 1700

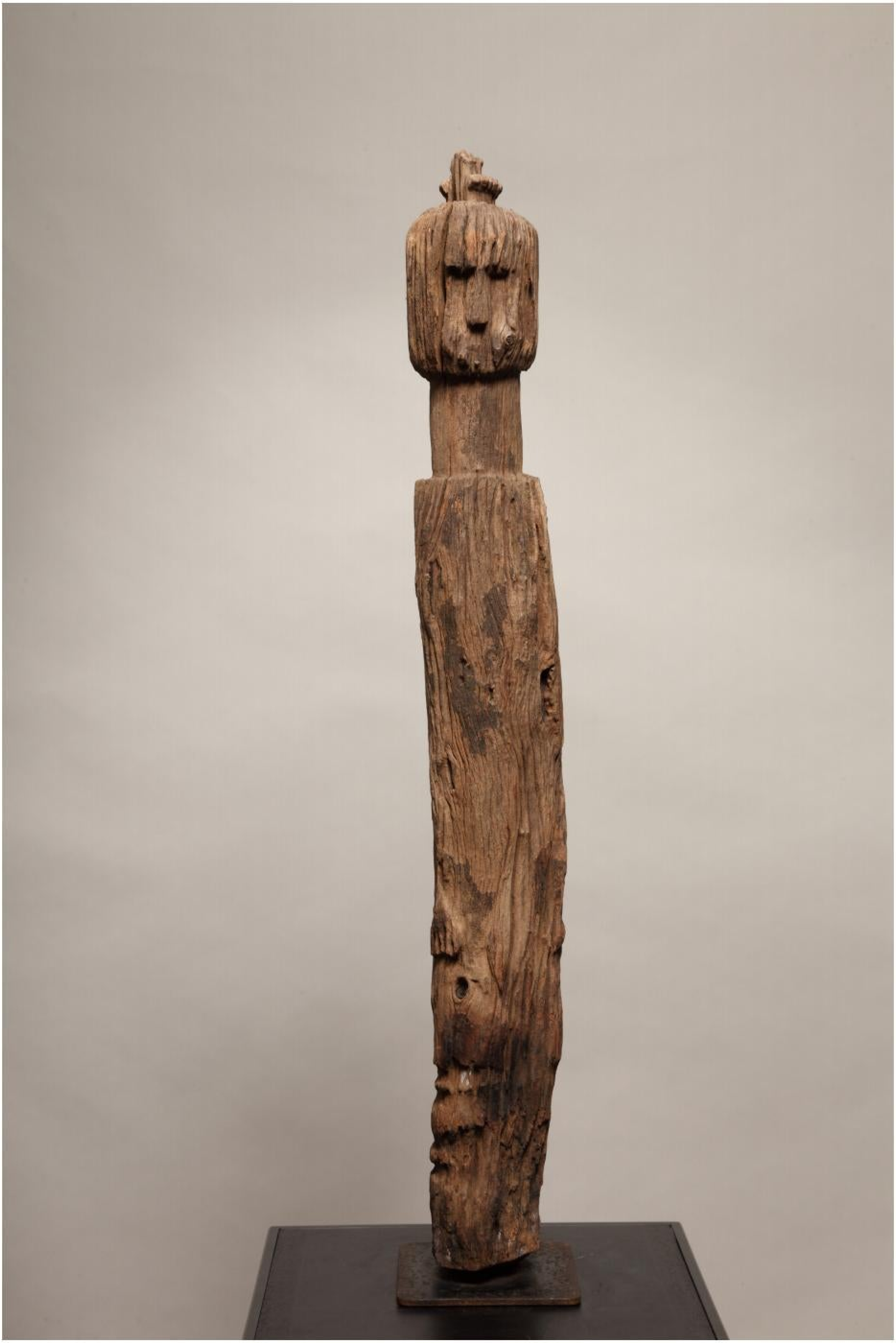
Bronze | 34 x 25 x 3 Inches

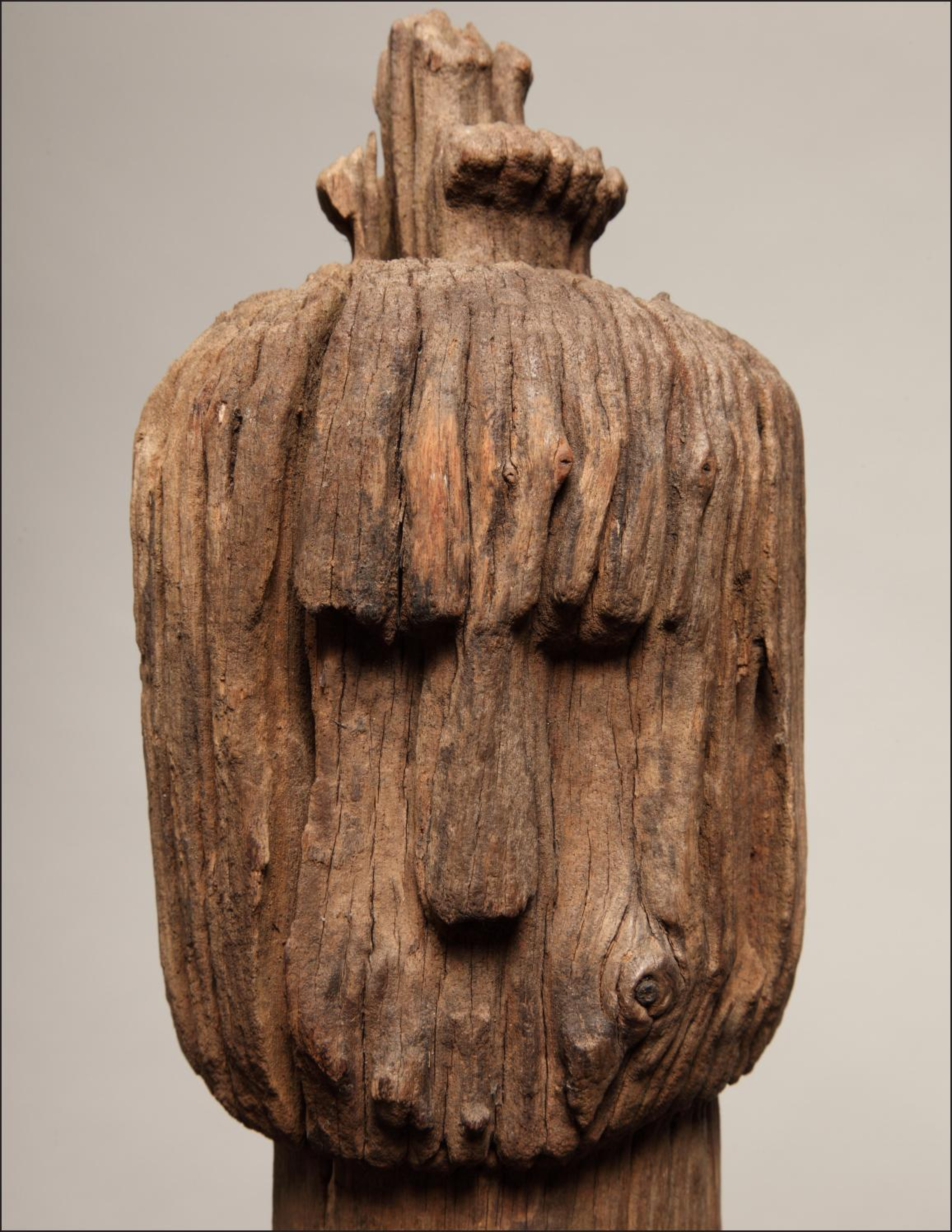


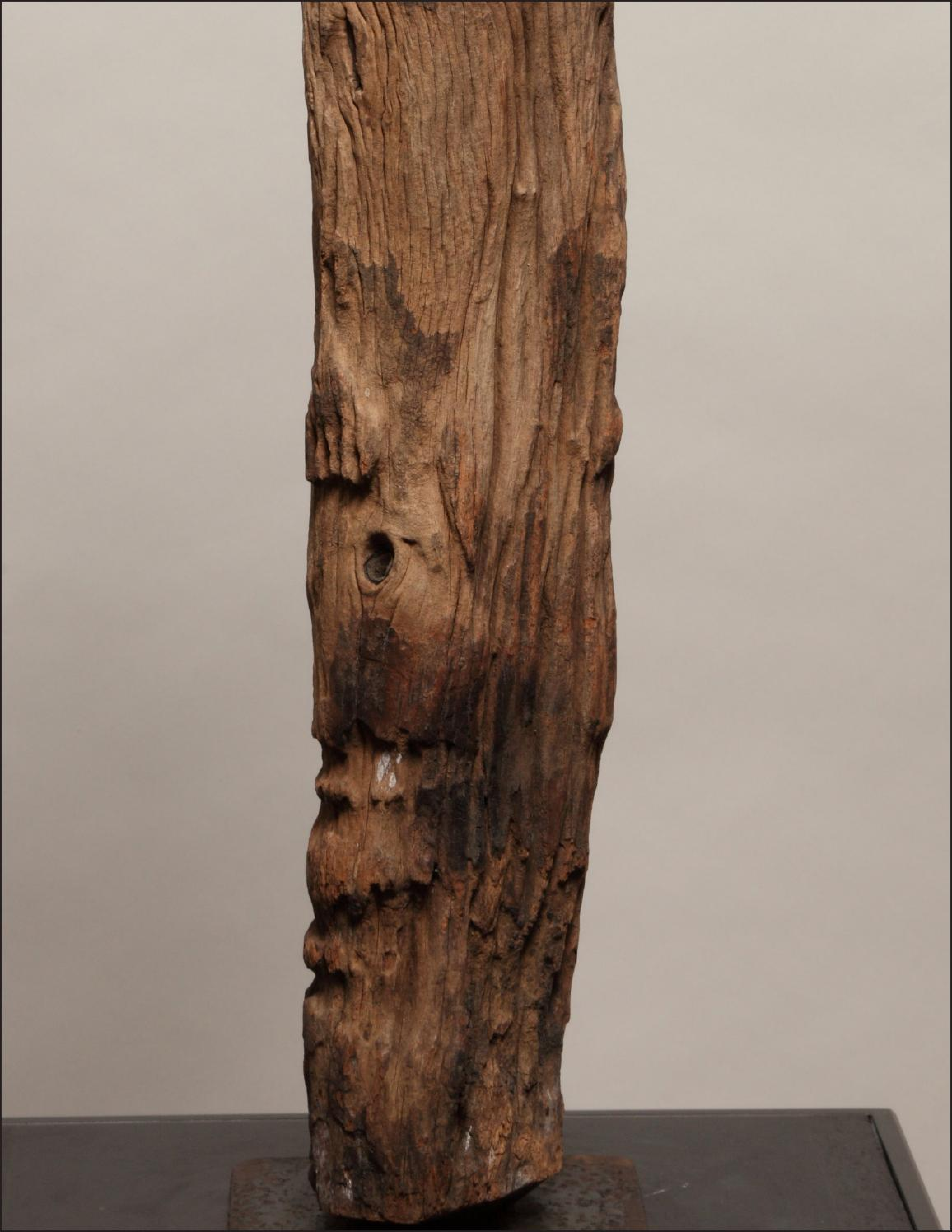
The Hampaton Gancestor figures would be found at the top of a Hampatong post adjacent to an ancestral shrine or outside of a longhouse in the Dayak, Boreno village center in Indonesia. The term ´hampatong´ refers to a wide range of figurative sculptures created by the various indigenous groups of Borneo, collectively known as Dayak peoples. Rather than one homogeneous society, Borneo is home to numerous communities with differing customs, languages and distinct art traditions.

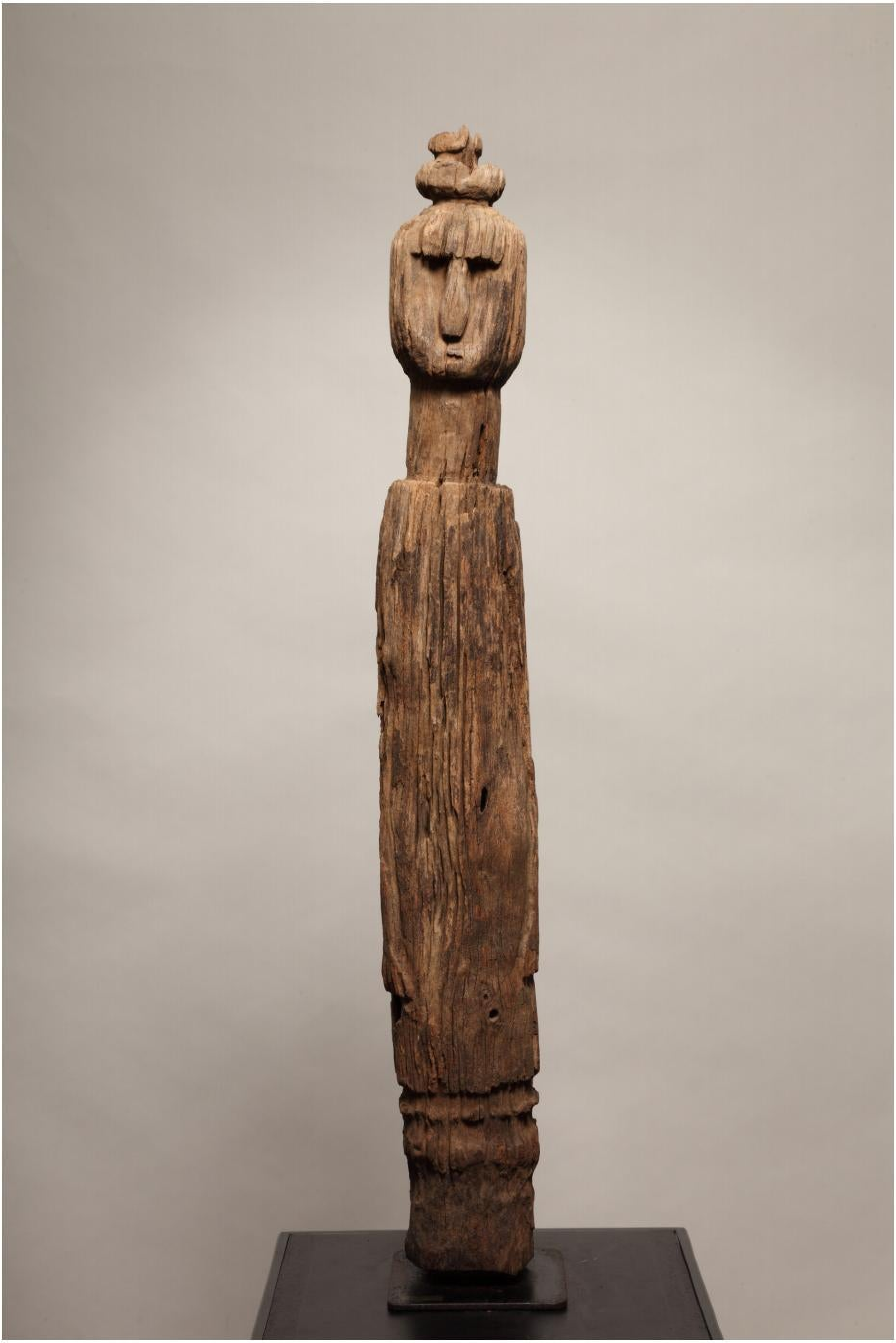
The form and function of hampatong vary between different Dayak groups but they are generally carved from hardwood and include amulets and small figures for domestic use and large sculptures that are sometimes over two metres in height. The present Hampatongs were placed near the house to depict recently deceased ancestors. These sculptures provide a temporary home for the souls of the dead and are a personal expression of remembrance for deceased individuals. The ornate ancestor carvings also serve a protective spiritual function and are a primary means of preventing disease from entering homes.

HAMPATON GANCESTOR FIGURES | C.19TH CENTURY | Carved Ironwood | 44 x 6 x 5 Inches

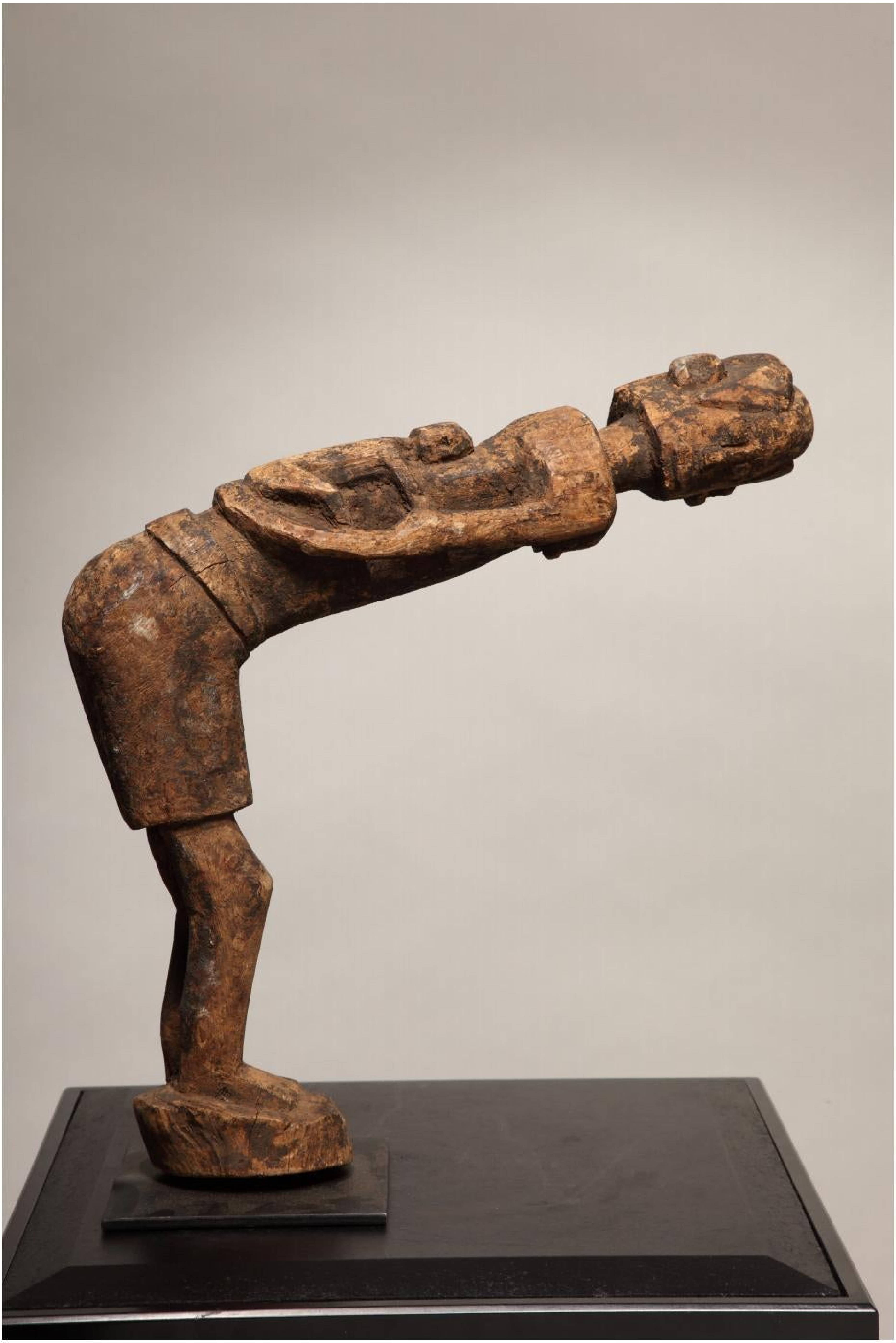




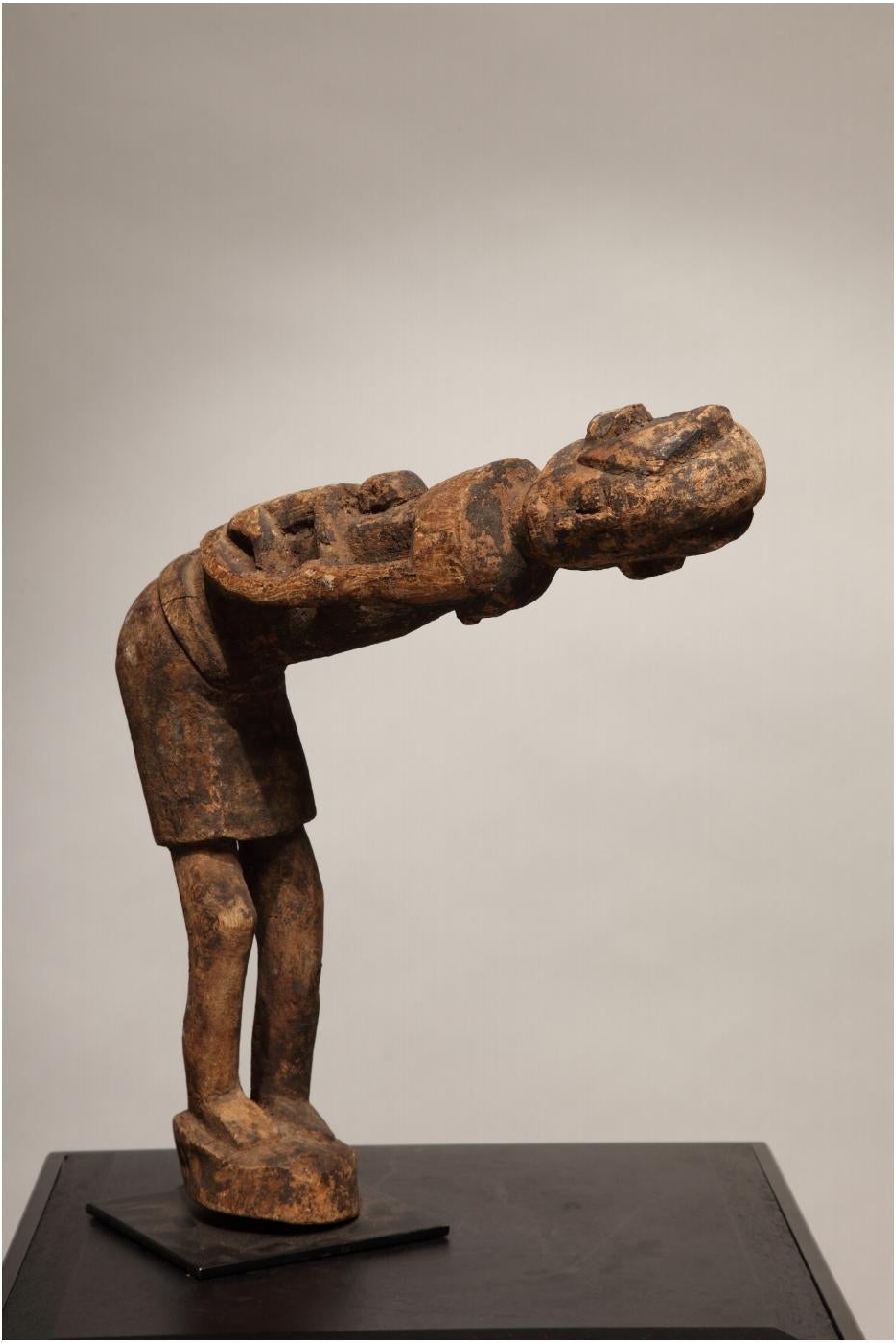


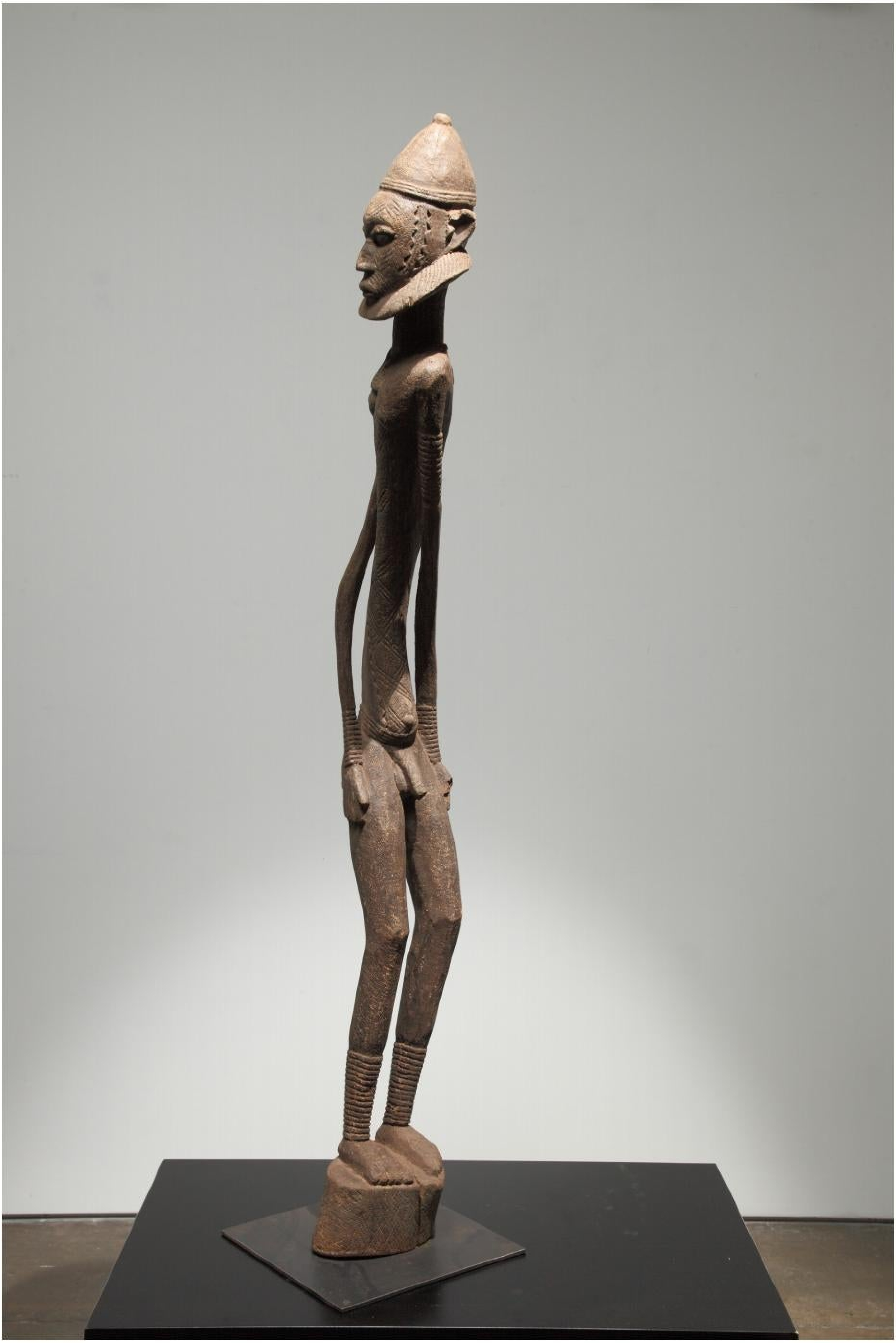


HAMPATON GANCESTOR FIGURES | C.19TH CENTURY | Carved Iron wood | 44 x 5 x 5 Inches

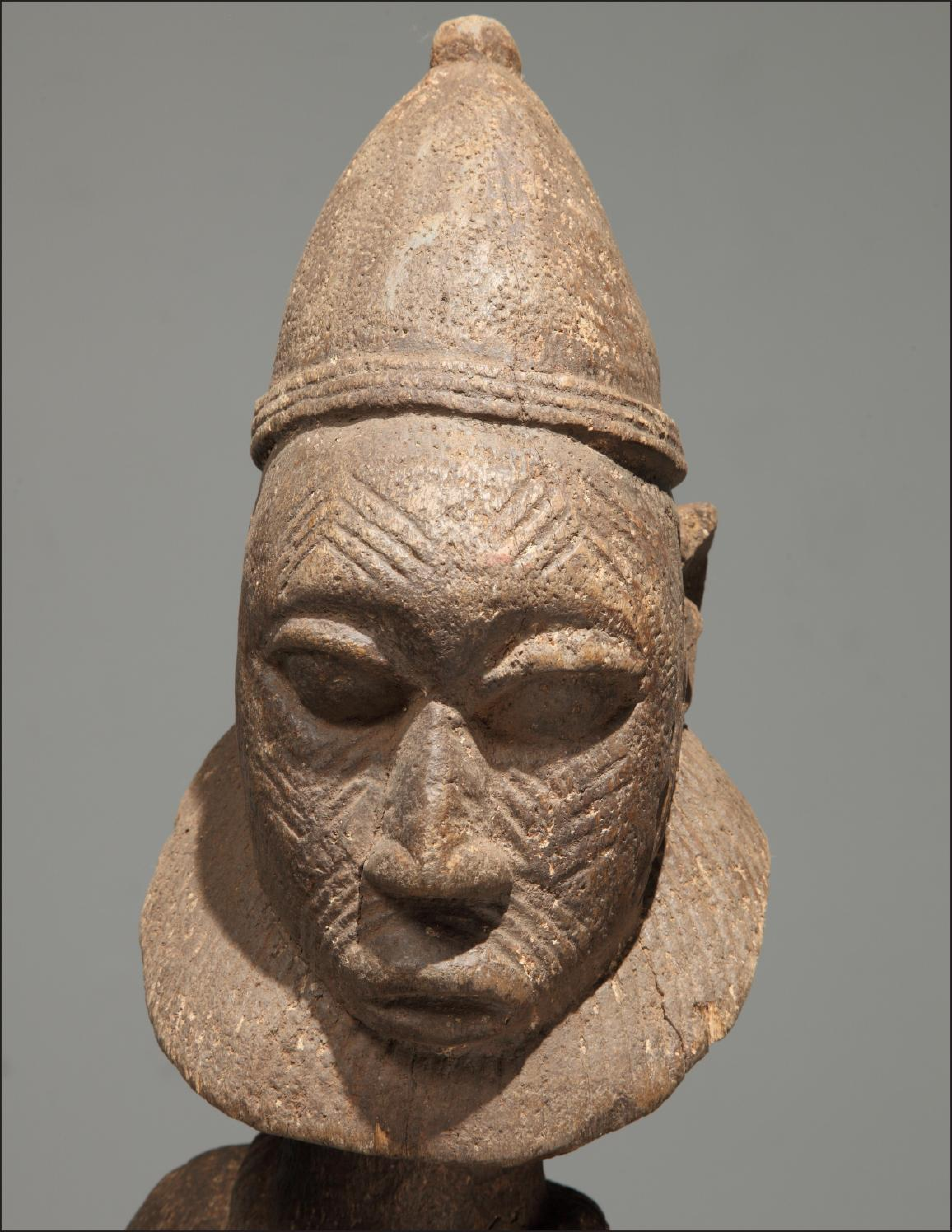


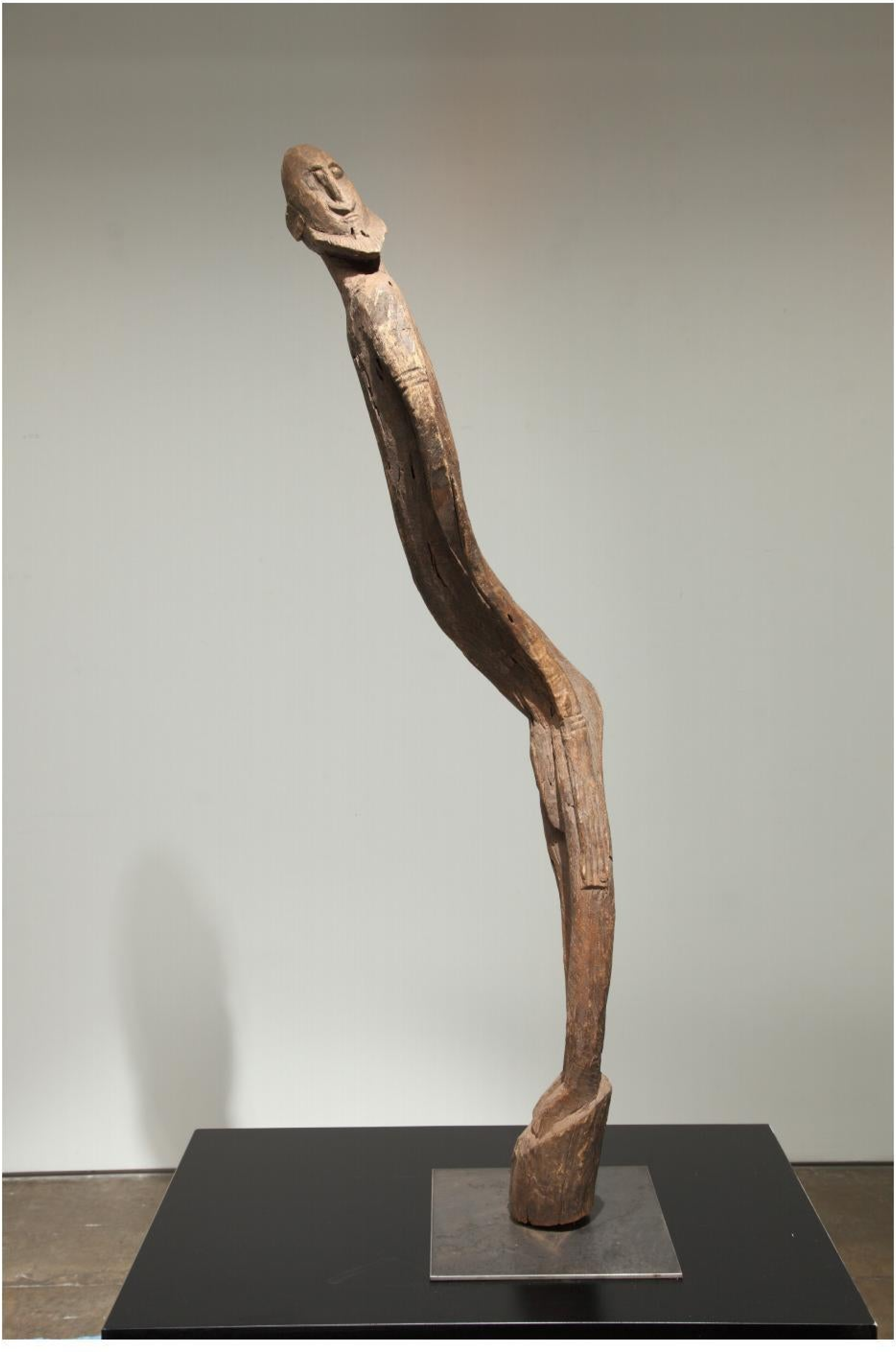
BAMBARA BURKINA FASO STATUE | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 19 x 18 x 5 Inches



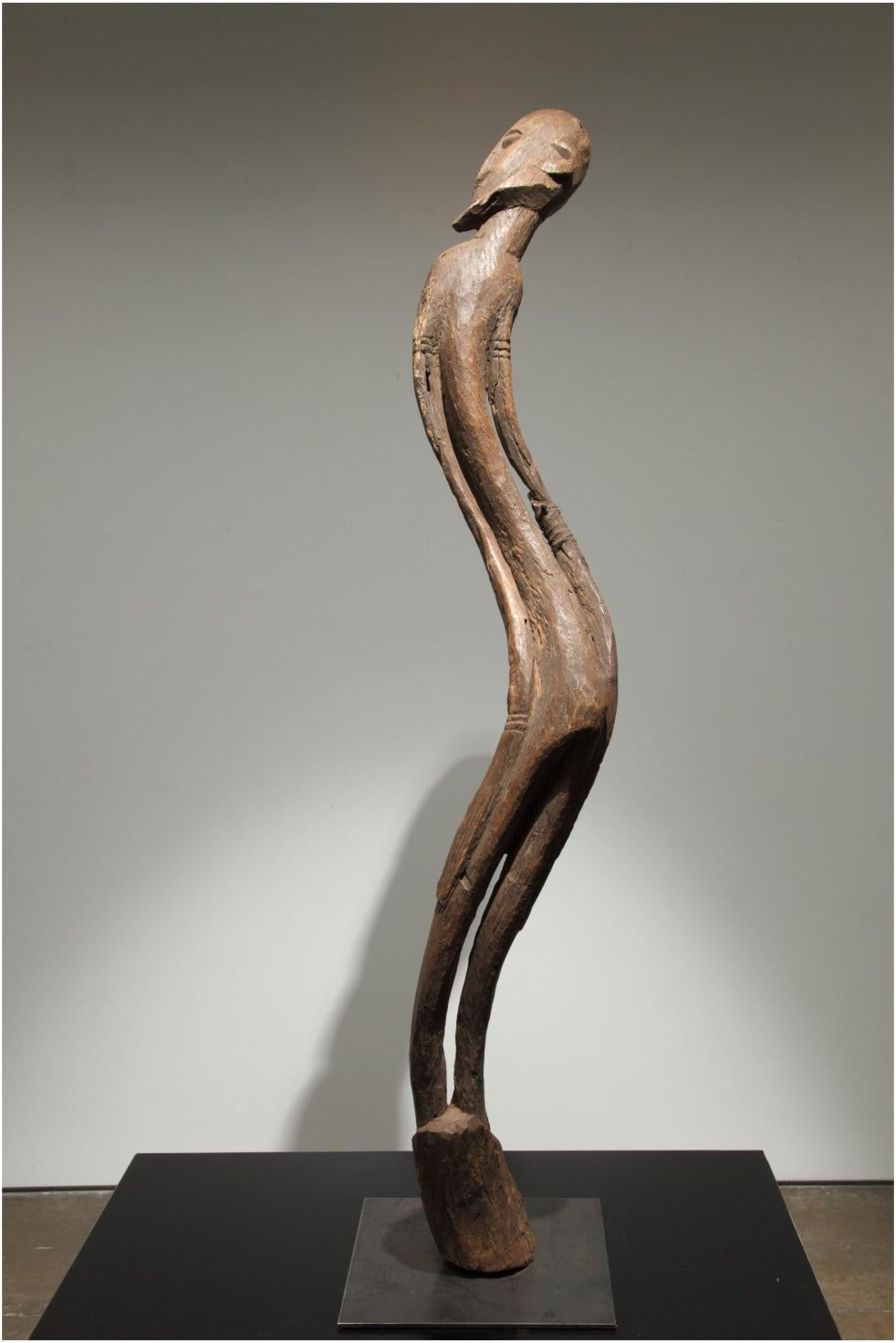


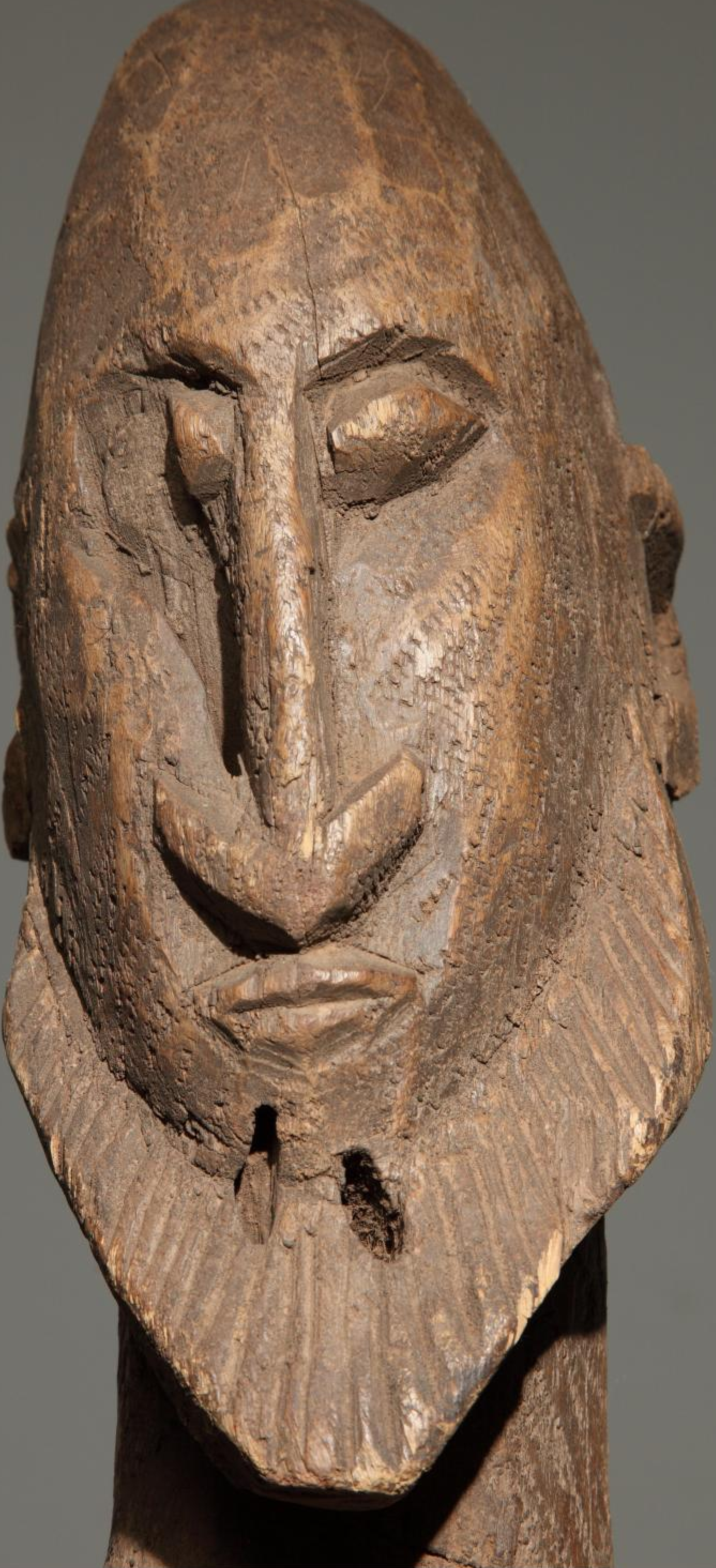
BAMBARA TALL MALE FIGURE | **EARLY 20TH CENTURY** | Wood | 70 x 14 x 14 Inches

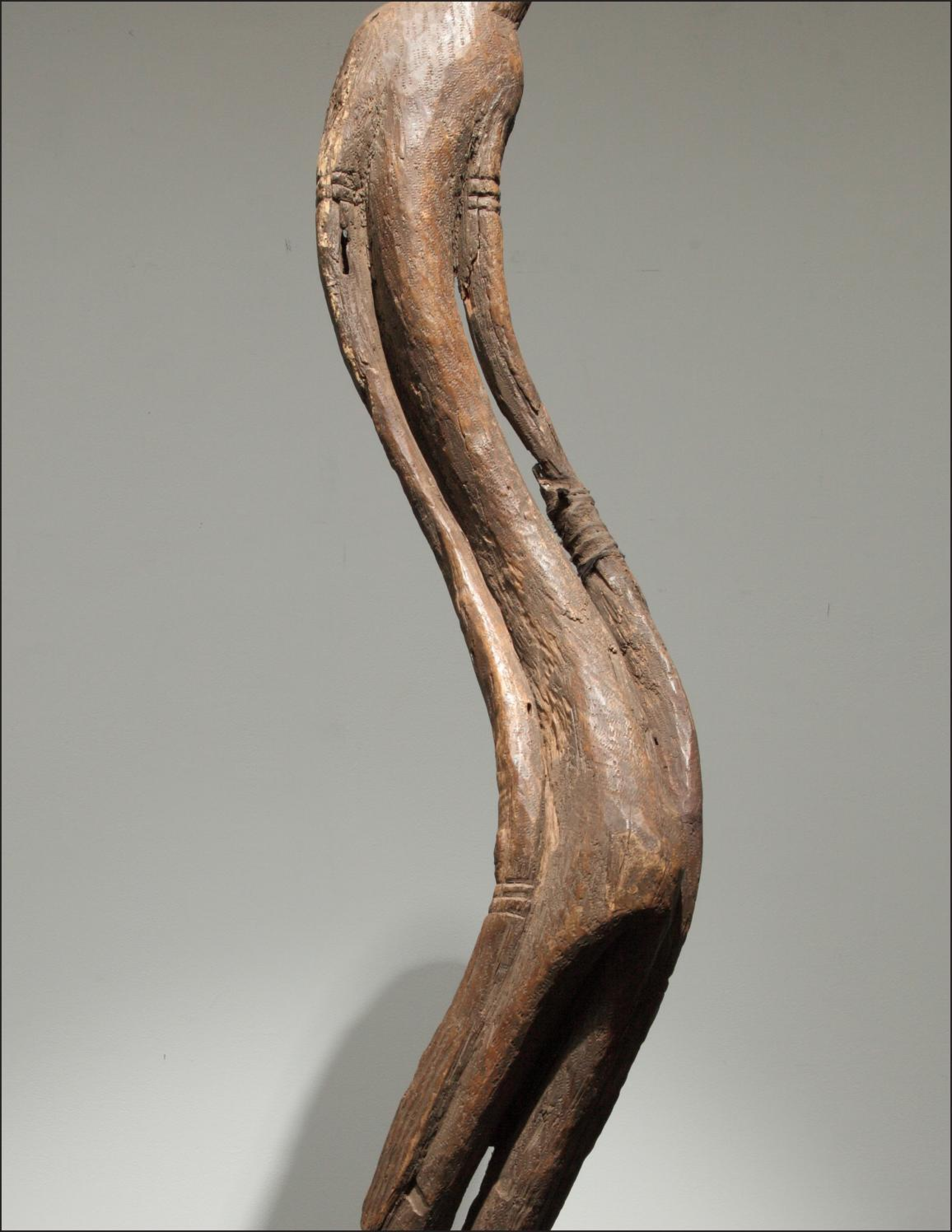


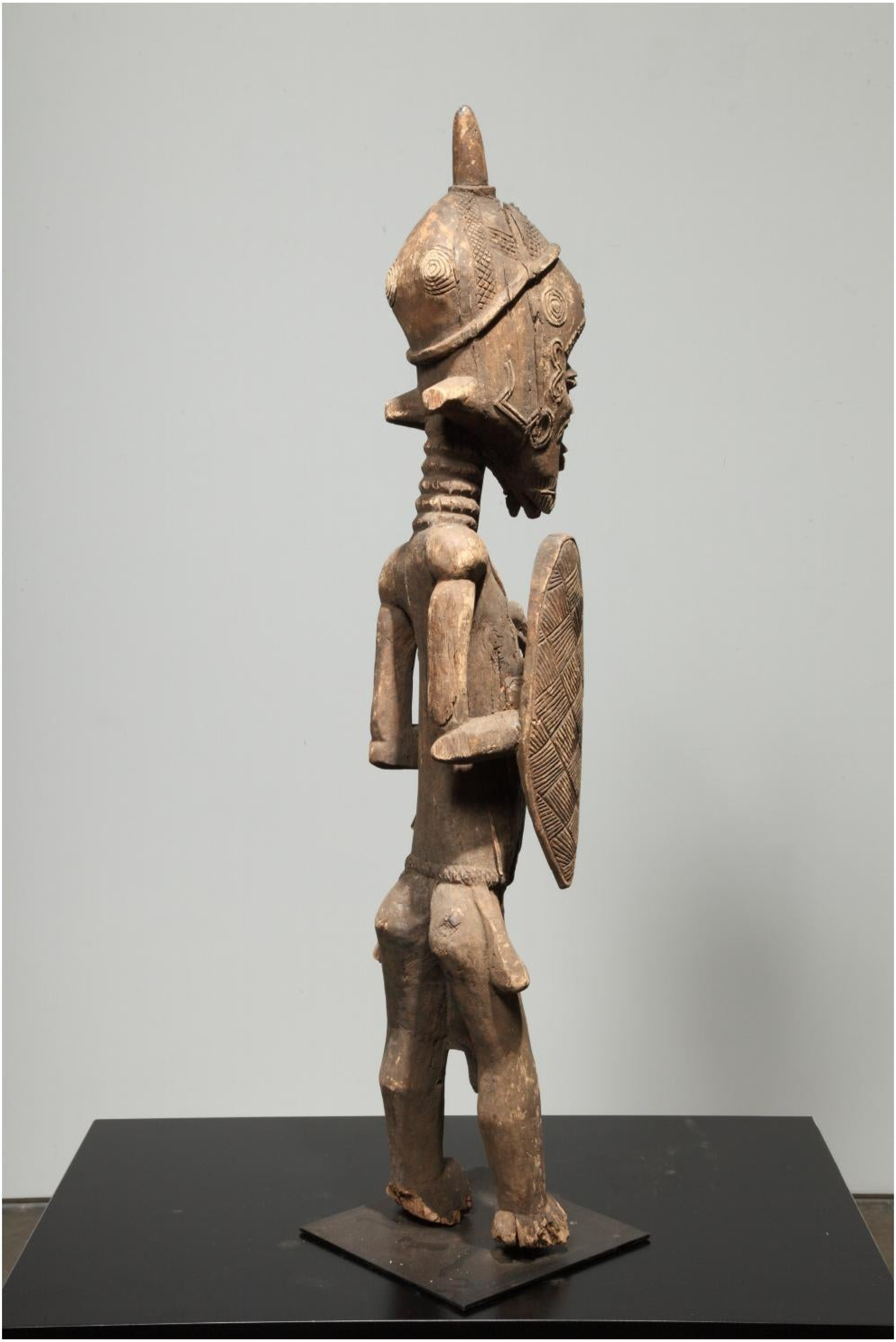


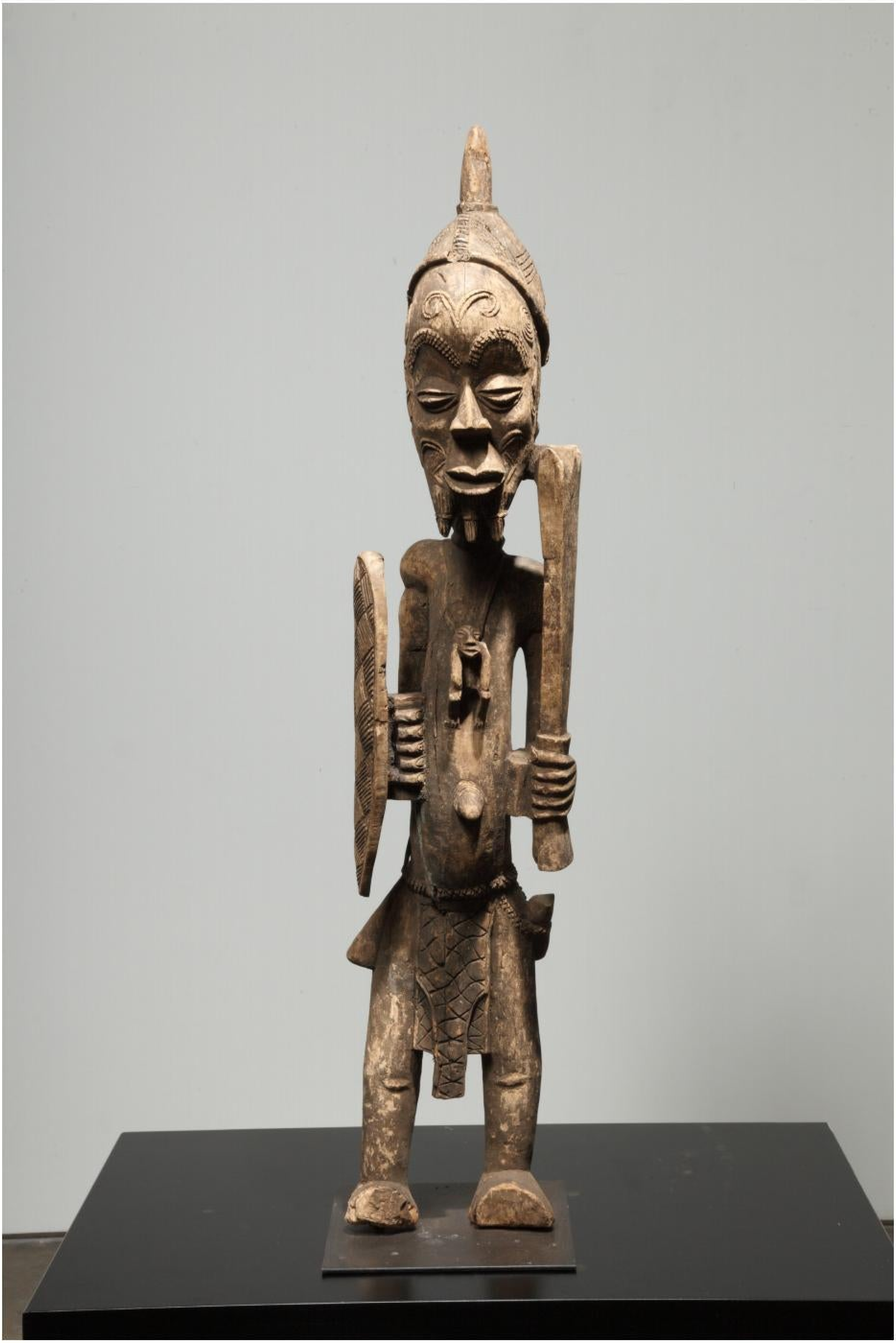
DOGON TALL MALE FIGURE | **EARLY 20TH CENTURY** | Wood | 65 x 21 x 14 Inches



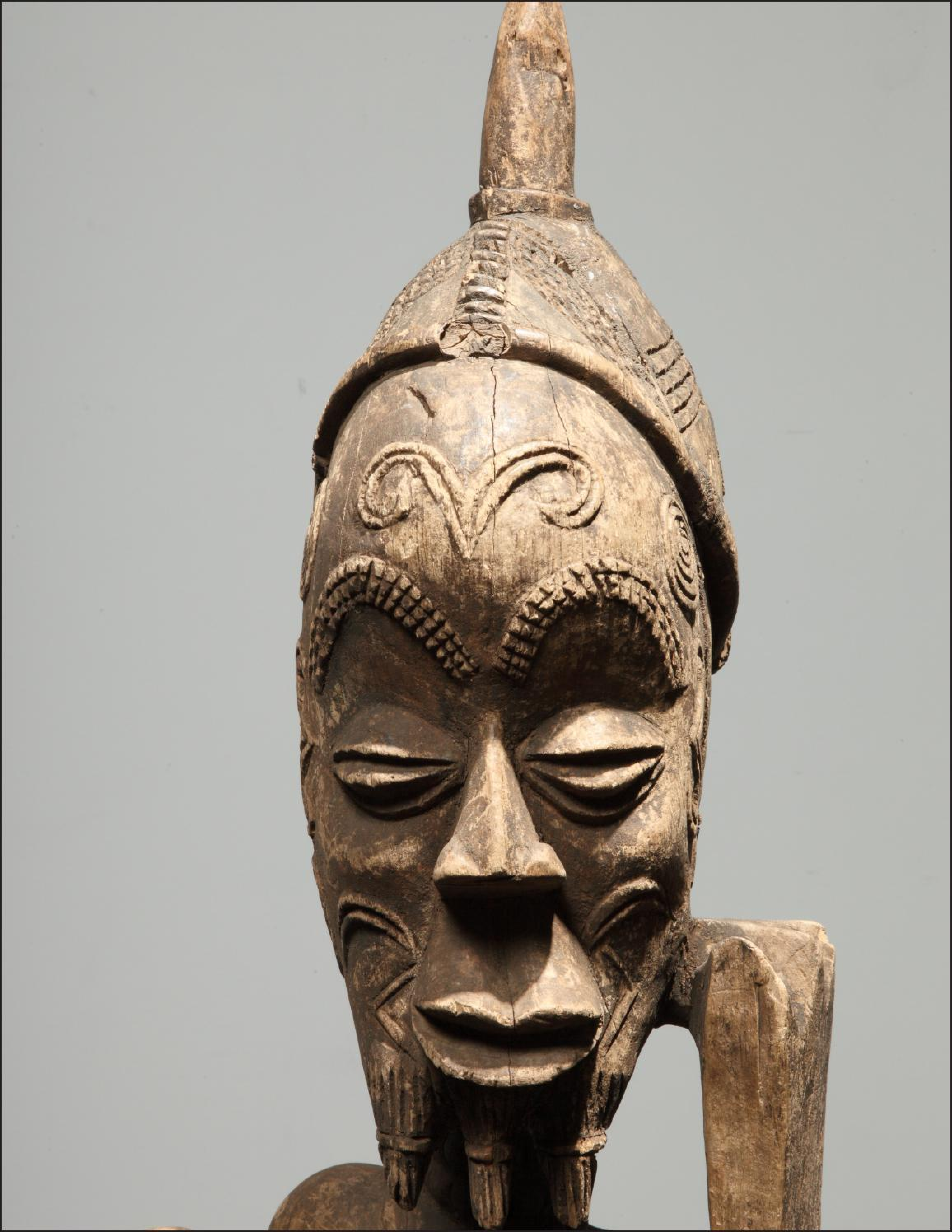


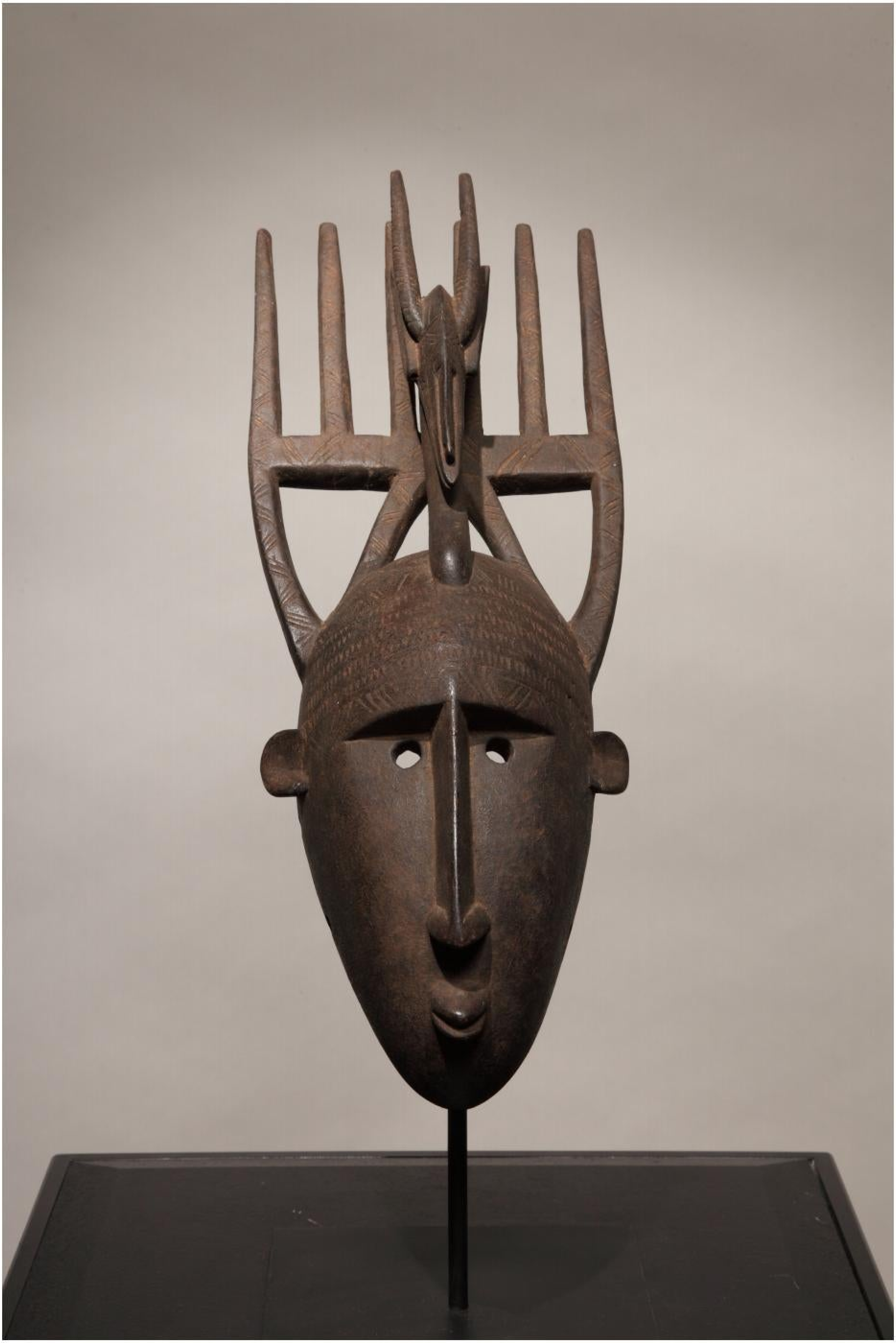






BAMBARA WARRIOR | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 53 x 12 x 12 Inches





One of the six best known of Bamana religious associations, Ntomo is a mutual aid association concerned with the education of young uncircumcised boys. Members wear a wooden face mask during the initiation festival at harvest time and when begging for rice. The number of horns on such masks (two to eight) symbolizes a human being's levels of increased knowledge. Other masks of this type are covered with cowrie shells or small red seeds with further esoteric significance. The miniature mask rising from the forehead can be compared to other Ntomo masks that feature a full human or animal figure. This mask's extremely dark and well-rubbed surface attests to years of age and use.

BAMANA MASK | MID 20TH CENTURY | Carved Wood | 20 x 8 x 4 Inches

The name Kru or Krahn is derived from Gio Kuare, Gio (Dan) people of Ivory Coast and Liberia refers to people living across the Cestos.

The most reliable story of the Krahn or Kru is that Old Man Krai, who ruled some villages, sent some porters to the District Commissioner in Tappita. When the Commissioner asked who they are, they replied; "We are Krai people." From then, they became "Krahn" or "kru". The present 'Krahn are also a result of intermarriages. Many (ancient Semitic) 'Krahn', and their descendants, believe that objects have spirits or souls. An example of this is seen in several Kru artifacts found in 1979 near Maryland County, Liberia.

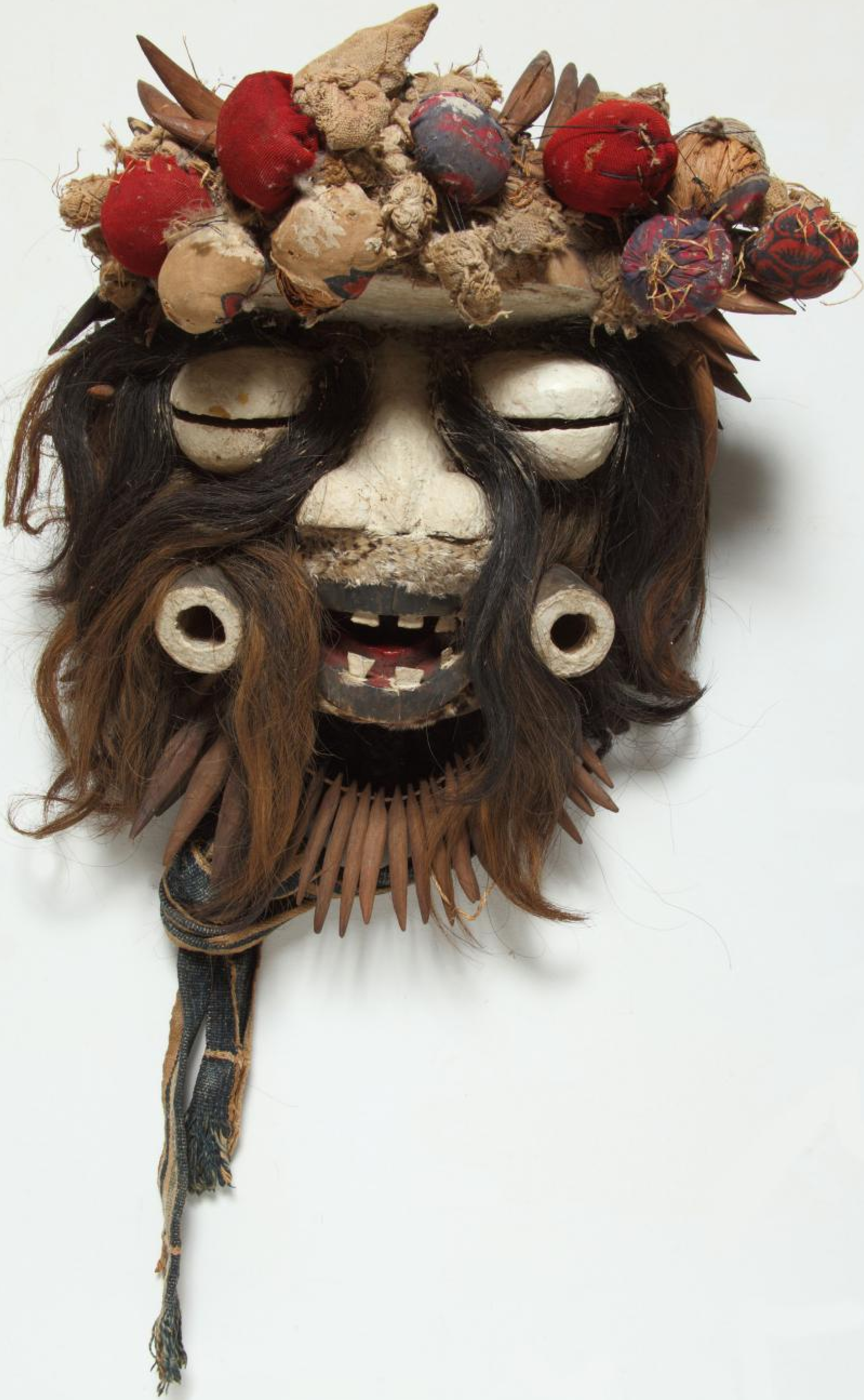
Although scholars "claim" that they are not certain of their origins, some sources believe that the "Kru" viewed certain object carvings as living entities typically found in small bodies of water, such as rivers and creeks, these artifacts would have been viewed as water spirits or 'Gods of water.' Additionally, it is believed that powers associated with these beings included healing, fertility, and the ability to end conflict and create new villages.

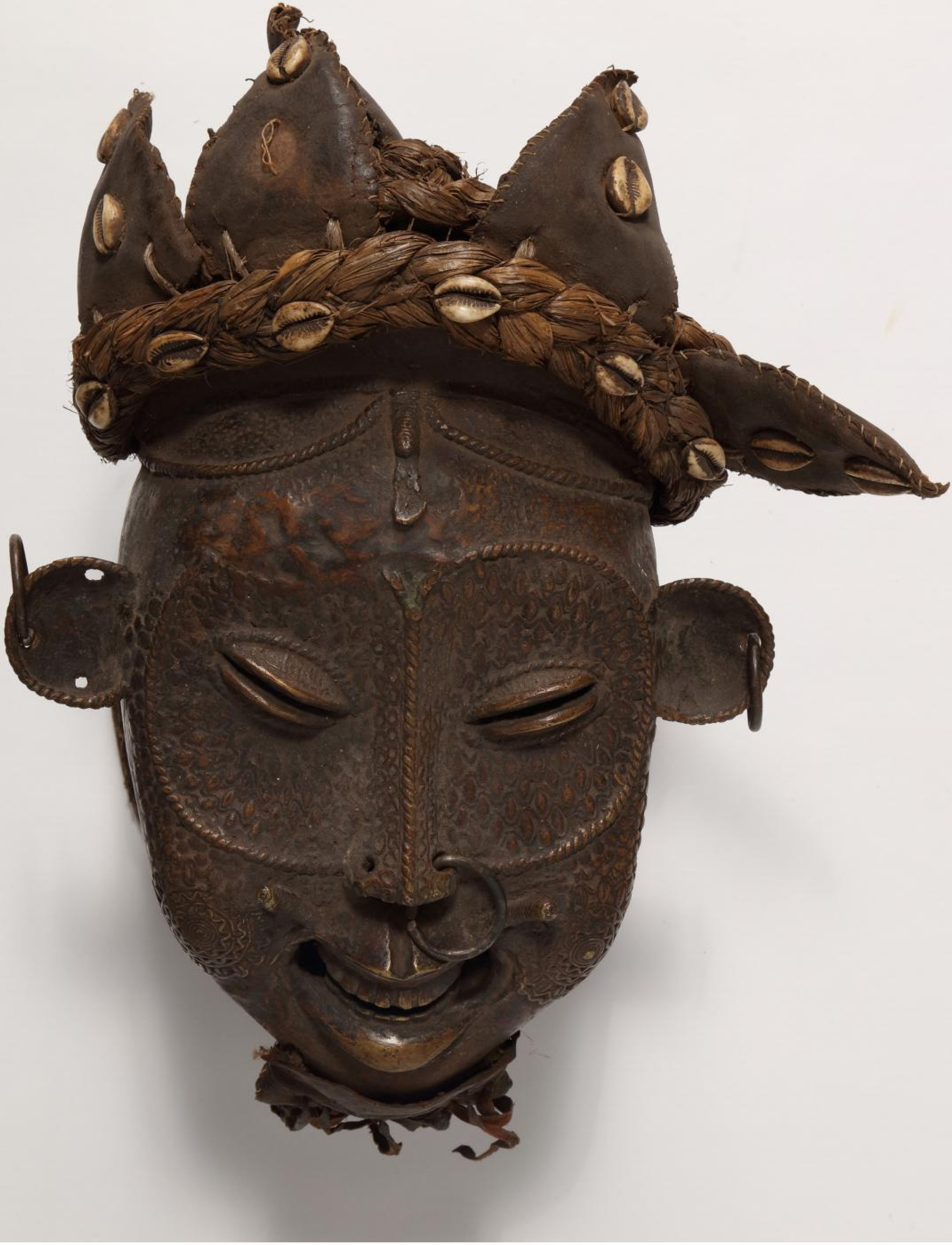
The "Wee" (also renamed / reclassified migratory ancient Semitic descendants) of Cote d'Ivoire, believe that the natural world is made up of spirits, referred to as "bush spirits." These spirits are part of the world untouched by man, and the Wee believe keeping these spirits appeased is vital to the health of the tribe. It is also believed that the bush spirits take corporeal form in order to interact with the villagers and participate in ceremonies.

The 'Wee' feel that the bush spirits can communicate with humans through dreams, often demanding ceremonial masks be created in their honor in either male or female forms.

These masks then serve a variety of functions ranging from ritual ceremonies, forms of entertainment, and focal points in moral stories to judicial and political controls. All Wee masks are believed to deflect sorcery attacks, and many undergo shifts in their primary function during their lifetime.Masks such as this one are integral at the agricultural Festival of Ignames of the Yacouba tribe in Cote d'Ivoire

KRU FACE MASK (LIBERIA) | Fabric, Wooden Spikes, Animal Pelt Kaolin | 17 x 16 x 9 Inches





The Bamileke are part of a larger cultural area known collectively as the Cameroon Grasslands. Within the Bamileke complex there are numerous smaller peoples who are loosely affiliated and share many similarities while retaining separate identities. The Bamileke originally came from an area to the north known as Mbam, which is today occupied by the Tikar.

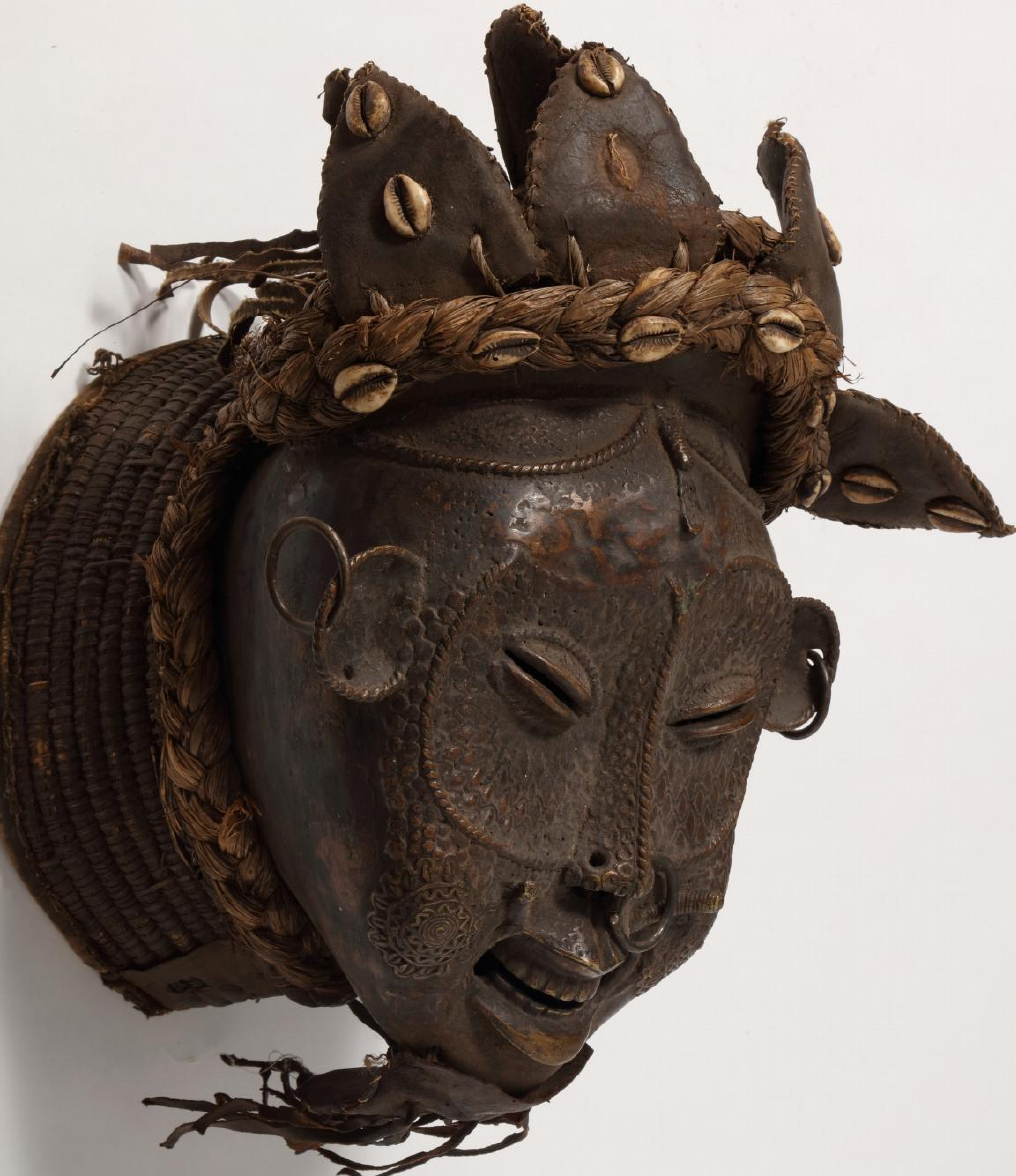
The Bamilike recognize Si (a supreme god), but they more commonly pay homage to their ancestors. Ancestral spirits are embodied in the skulls of the deceased ancestors. The skulls are in the possession of the eldest living male in each lineage, and all members of an extended family recognize the skulls of their group.

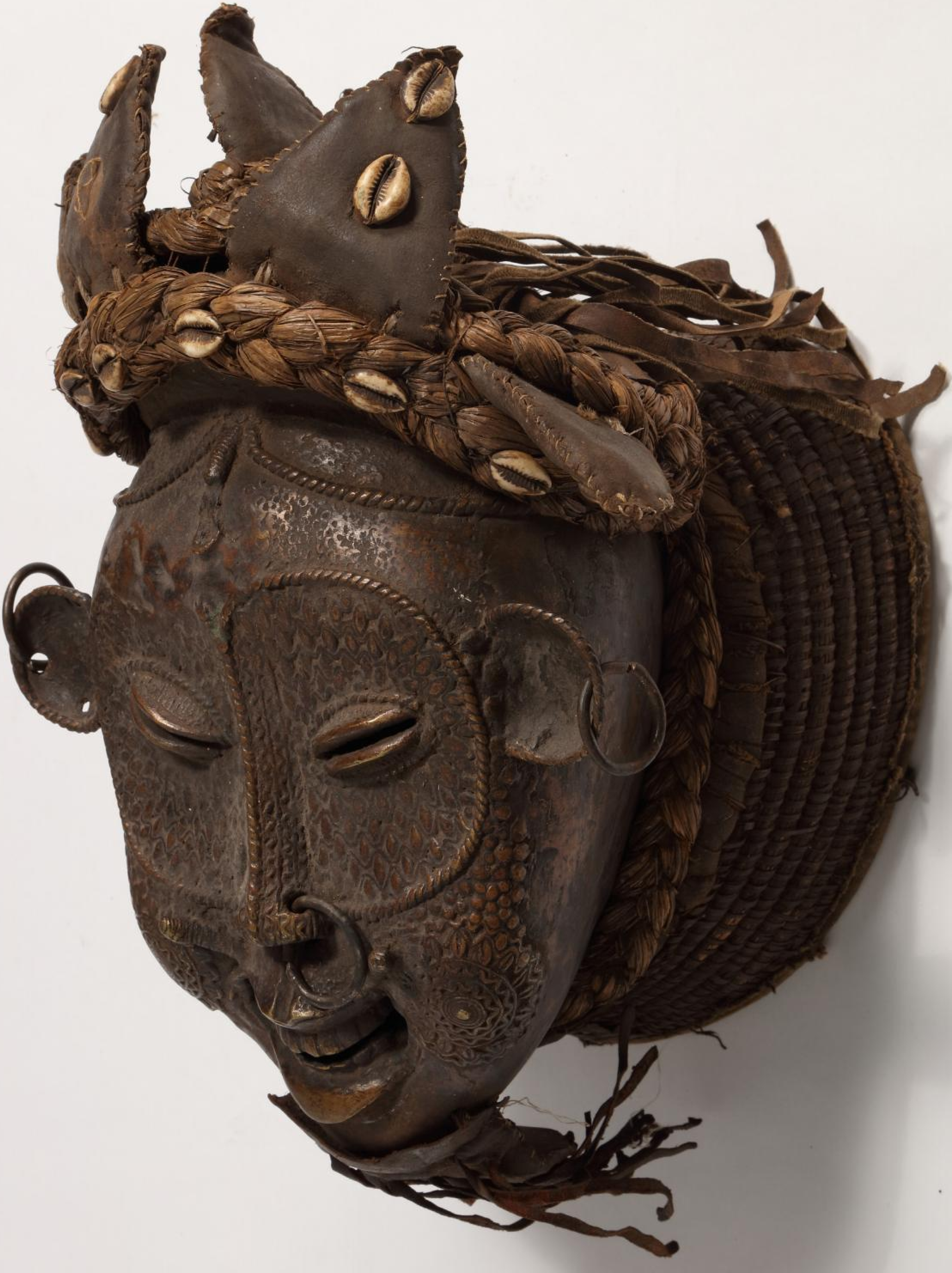
Masks similar to this one, covered with a thin sheet of copper applique and brass upholstery tacks, were kept in the royal storerooms of the Fon, the ruler of the kingdom of Kom. This type of mask was called akam, and was worn on top of the performer's head facing upward, together with a costume of blue-and-white cloth imported from the Benue River valley.

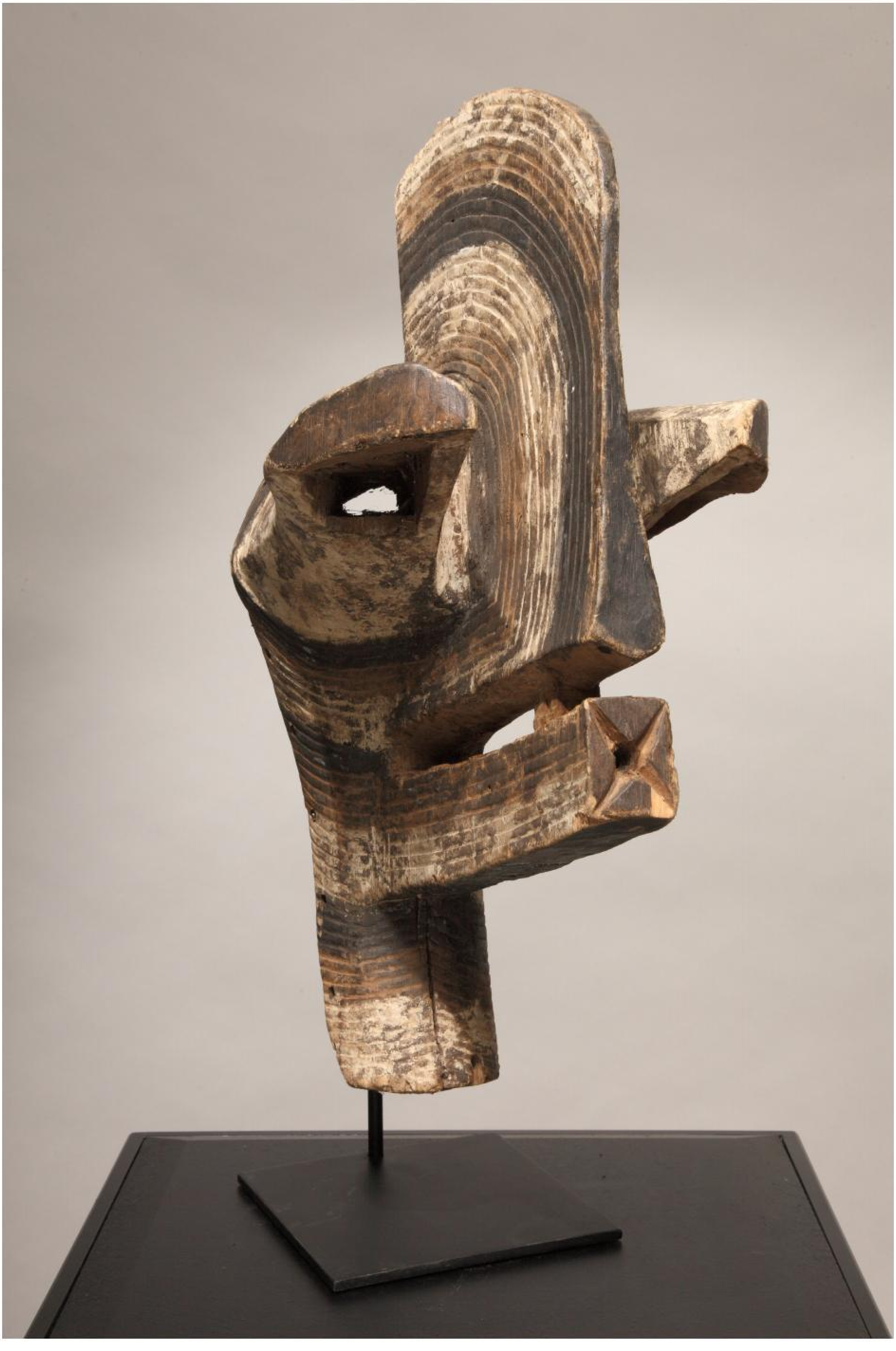
Writing of the nearby Bamun kingdom, Geary states: "Every Bamun stood in a pyramidal dependency relationship to the king which was visually expressed by the anthropomorphic masks' bowing before the king. Such an interpretation of the masquerade stresses the symbolic reproduction of social and political structure.

This was a very important mask type, worn by the chief dancer of the king's court. During celebrations, the dancer wearing this mask would lead a long procession of several distinctive mask types across the plaza in front of the palace.

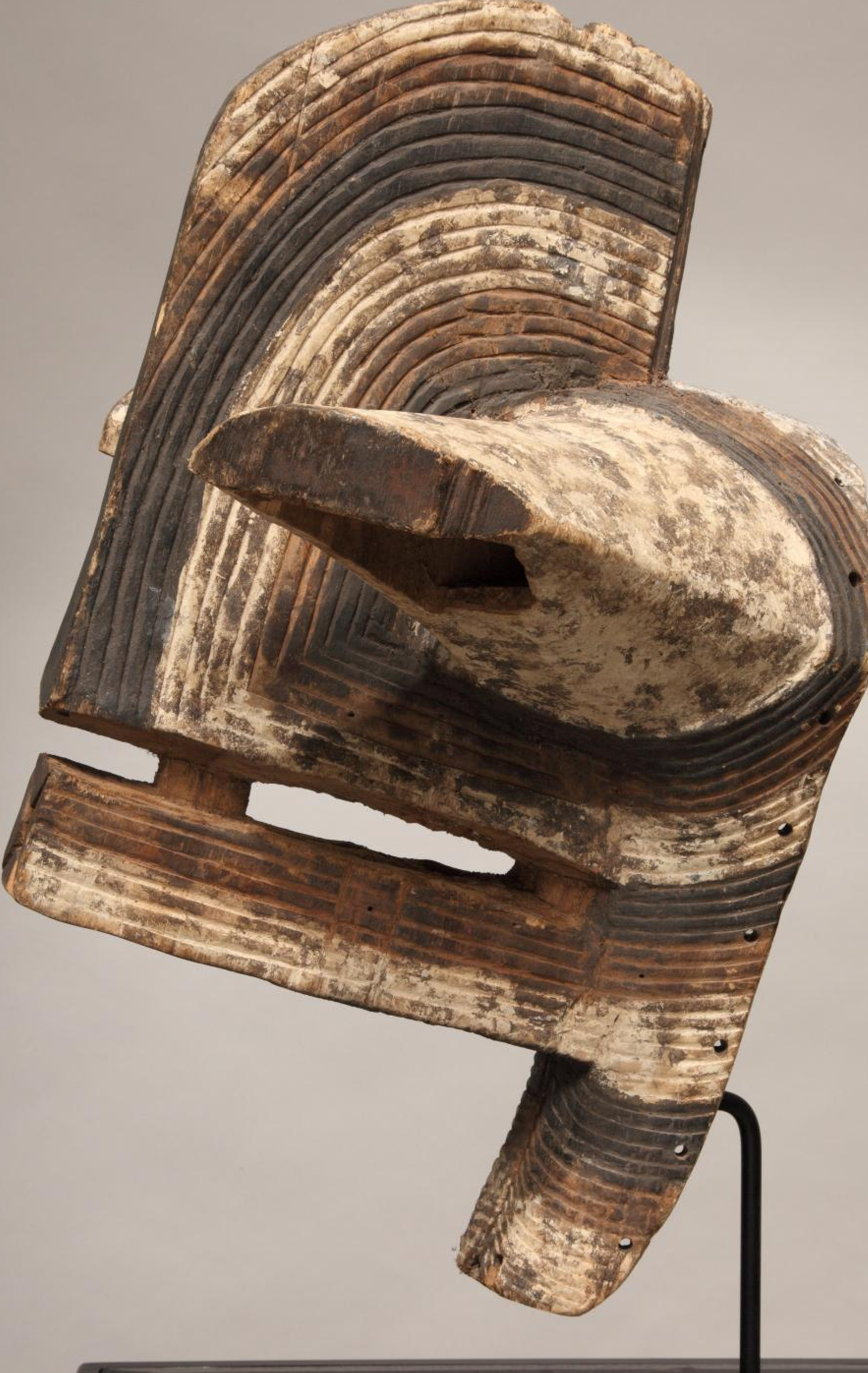
BAMILEKE MASK (CAMEROON) | Bronze And Mixed Media | 12 x 10 x 9 Inches







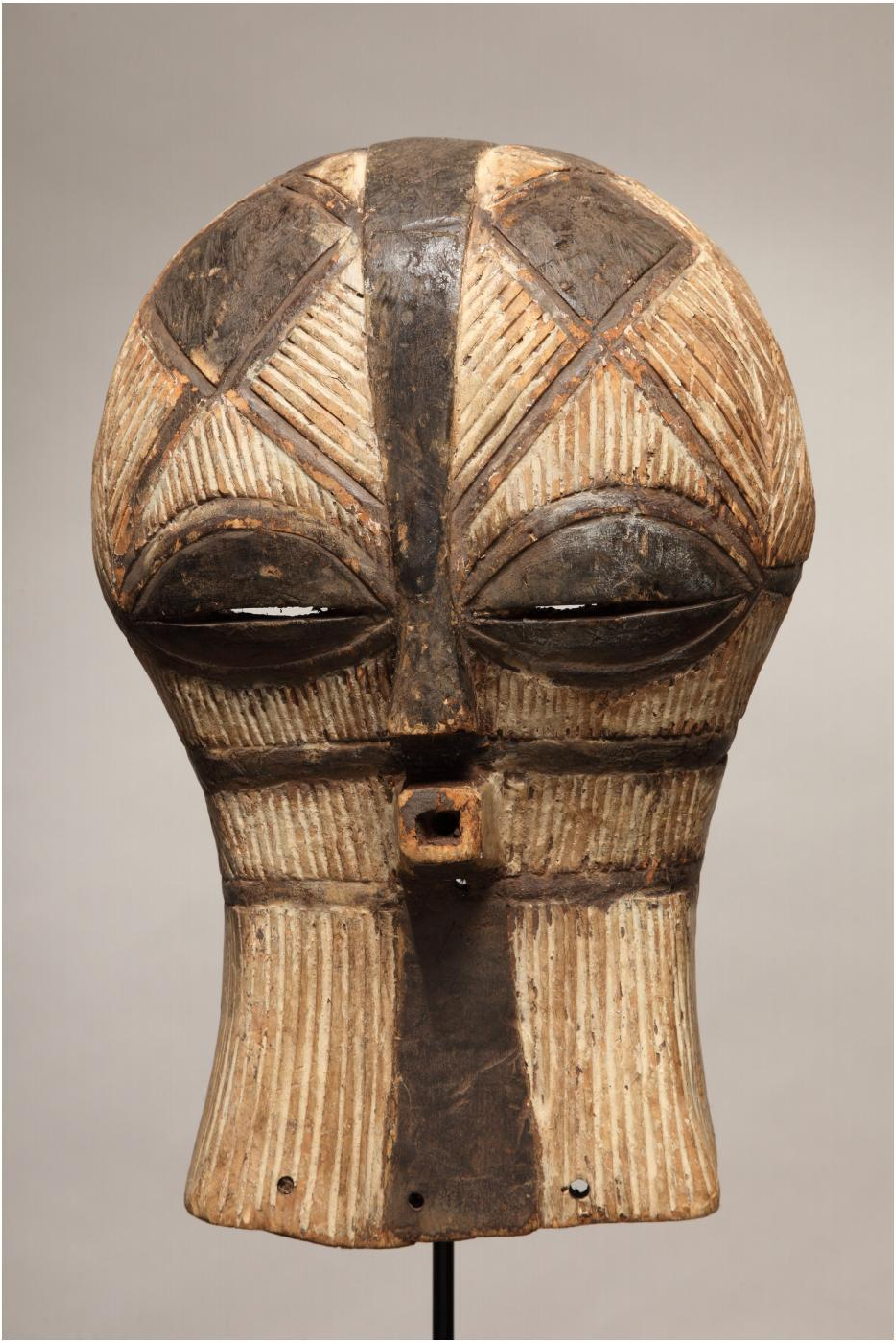
SONGYE MASK | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 24 x 11 x 14 Inches



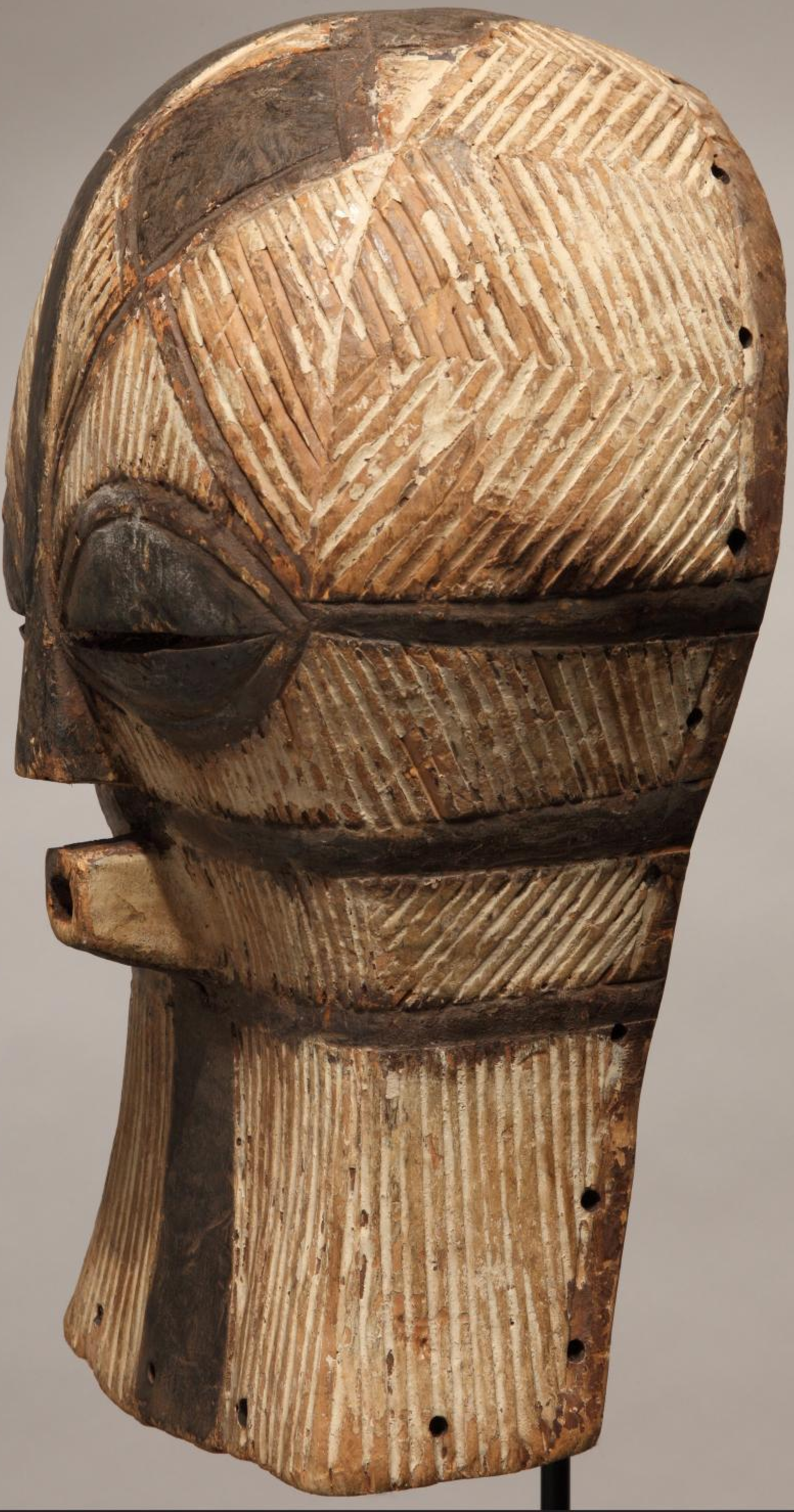
According to the recently published work of Dunja Hersak this fine old Songye mask, called kifwebe, may be distinguished as a female mask by the white color and the flat crest from the front to the back of the head. The term kifwebe describes the mask, the mask society, and the wearer of the mask who, in bwadi (a trance like state), becomes neither person nor spirit but kifwebe.

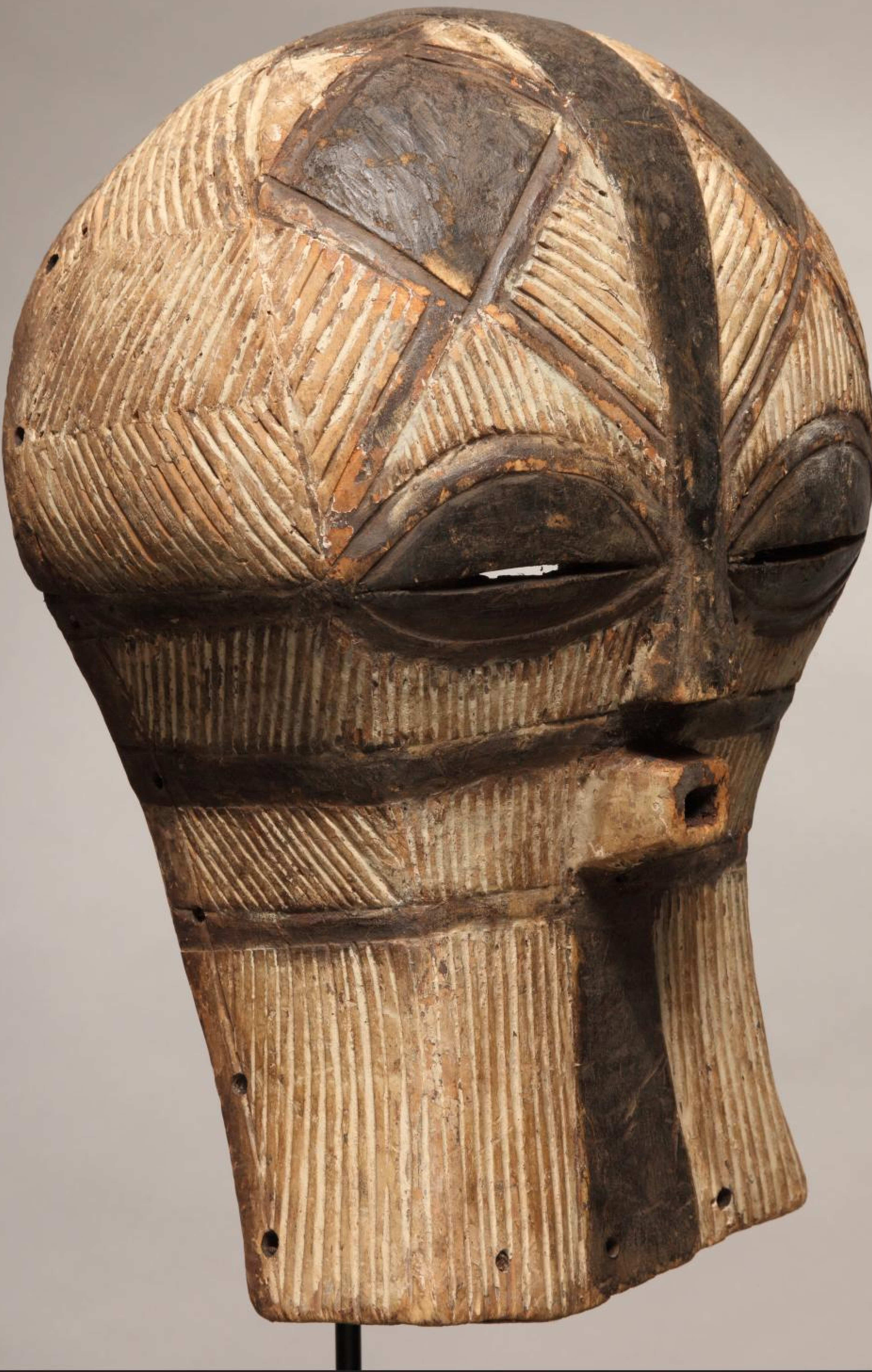
Bwadi bwa kifwebe (the secret male mask society) first appeared among the Songye soon after the turn of the century and had generally disbanded by the 1920's, although remnants still remain among the Eastern Songye. The society seems to have developed to deal with increasing competition for political power, as a means of controlling rival political factions through sorcery.

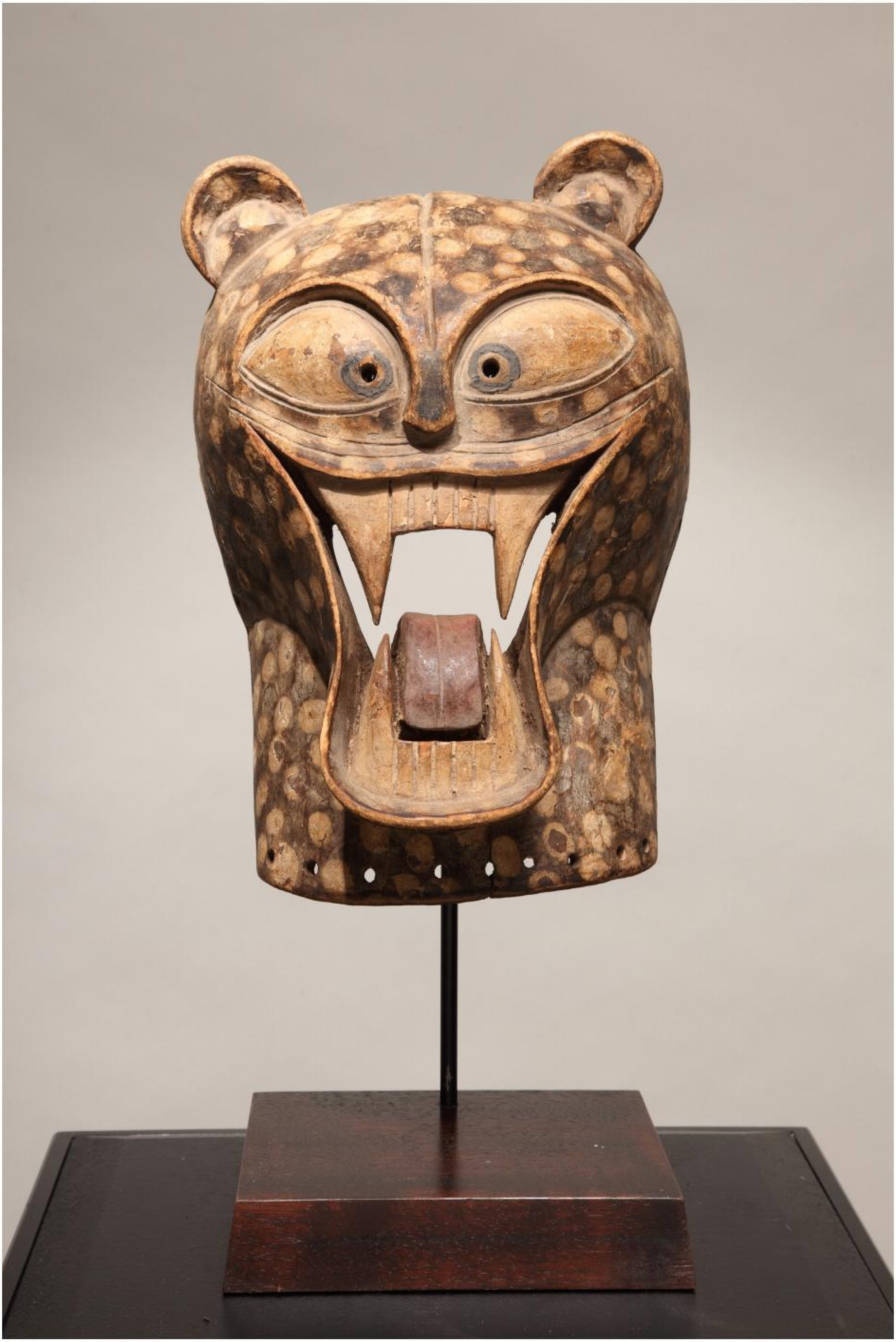
The mask society exercised social and political control through the use of evil magic. "The masqueraders inflict punitive ills upon the populace and absolve them through payment, thus increasing the resources of chiefs and elders who are the anonymous and ruling members of the bwadi bwa kifwebe society. At the same time, rivals of the political elite may be subjugated by involuntary initiation into the kifwebe society of sorcerers".



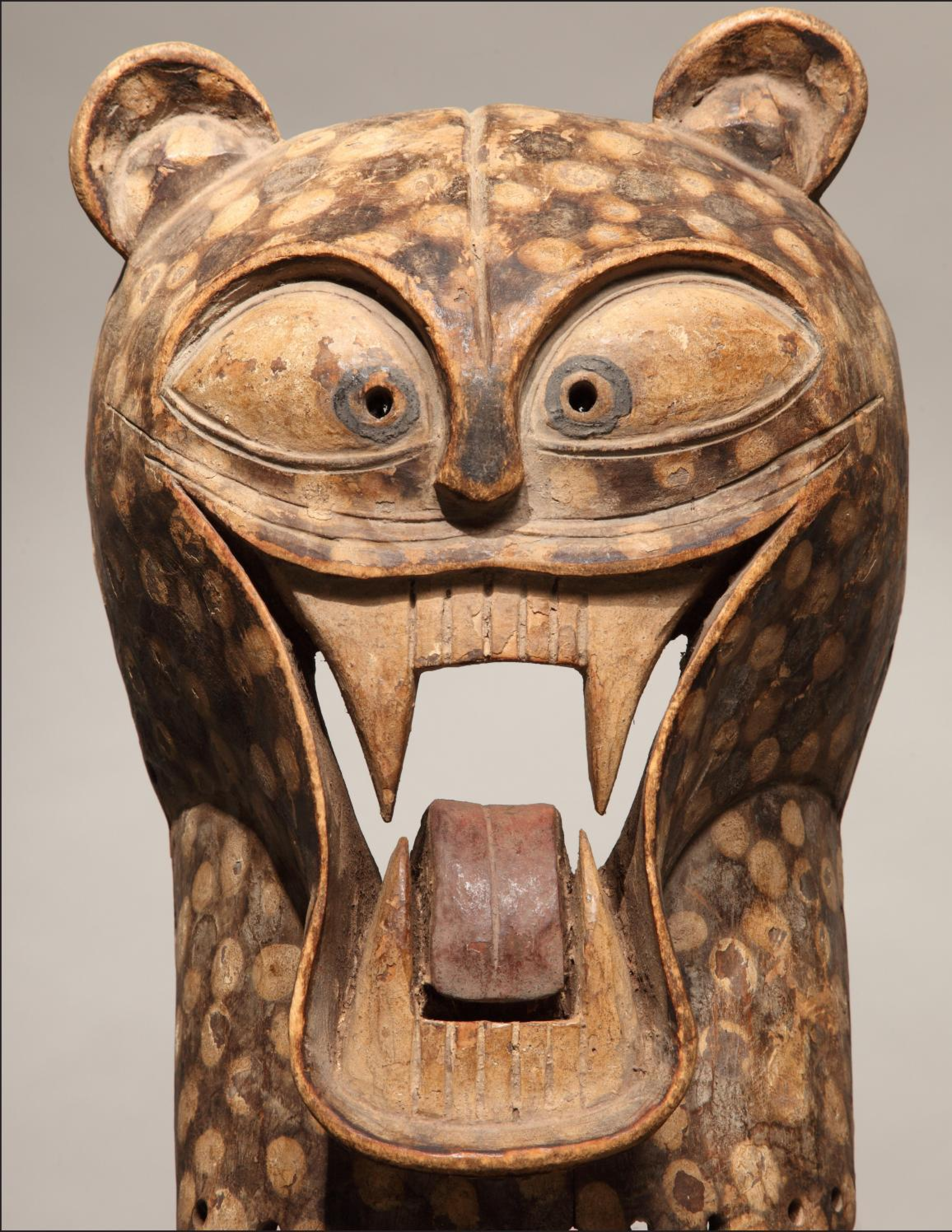
SONGYE ANTHROPOMORPHIC MASK | EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Wood | 17 x 12 x 6 Inches

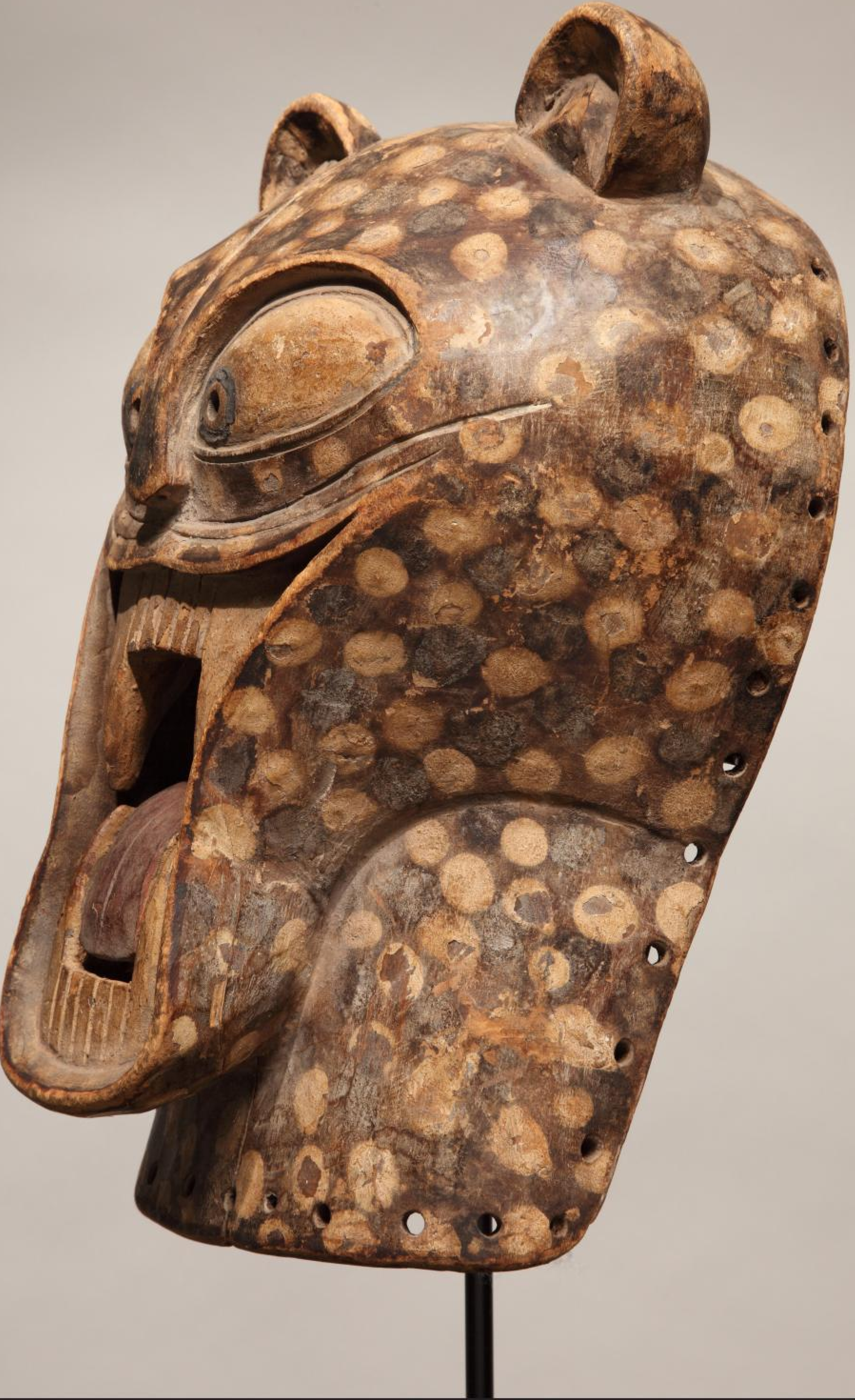


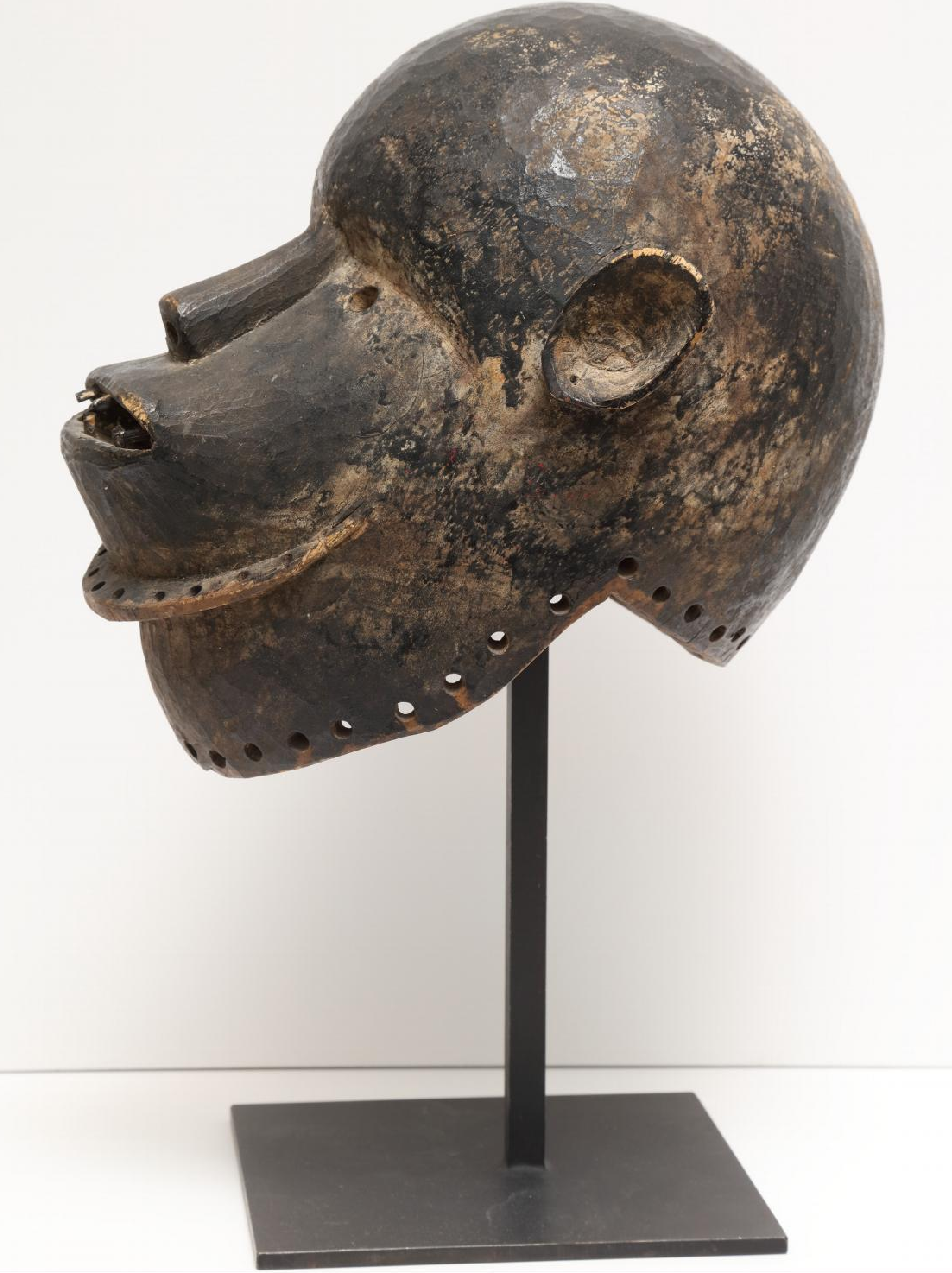


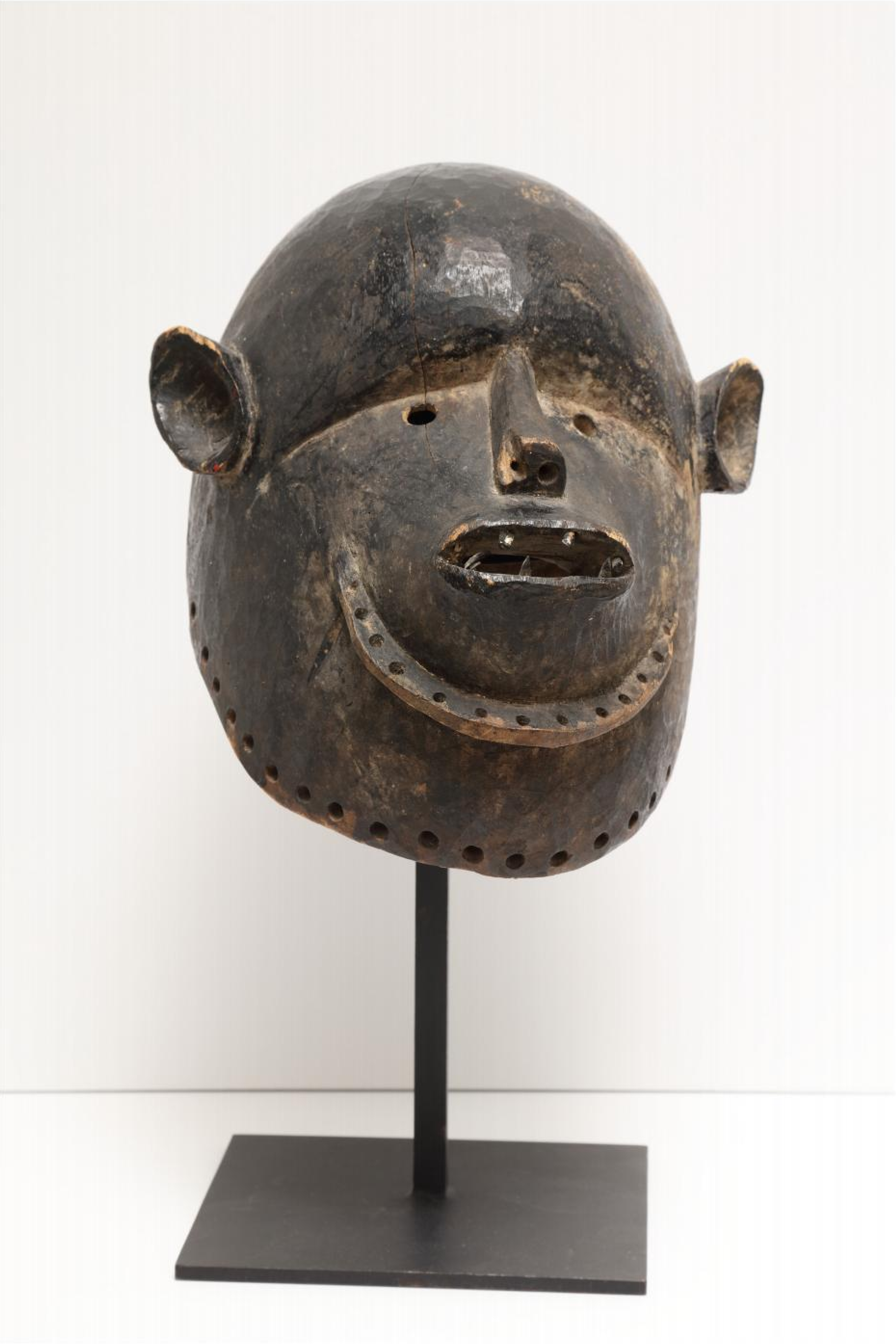


LUBA MASK | **EARLY 20TH CENTURY** | Wood | 16 x 12 x 6 Inches

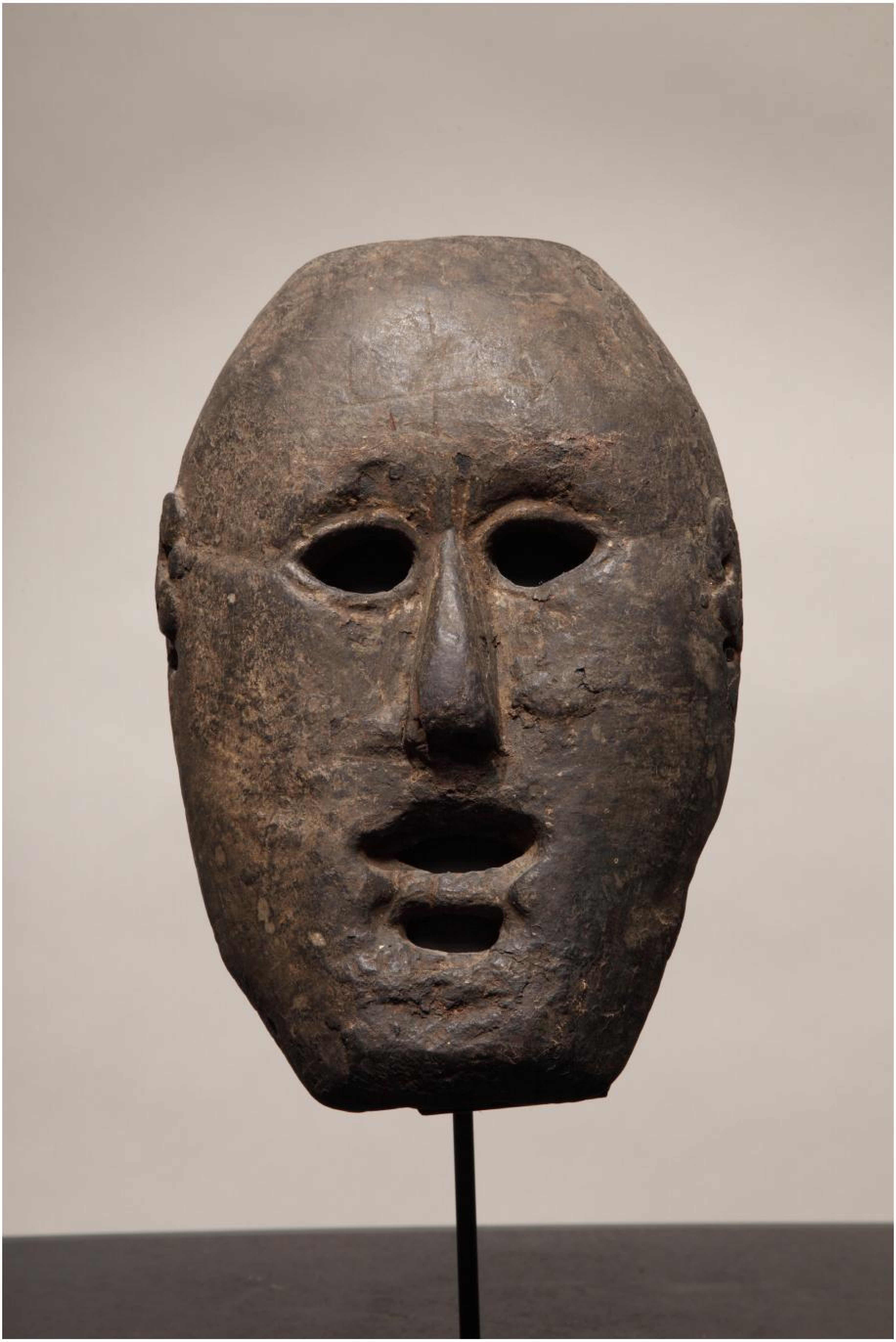








GORILLA MASK | Carved Wood on Stone | 18 x 9 x 12 Inches



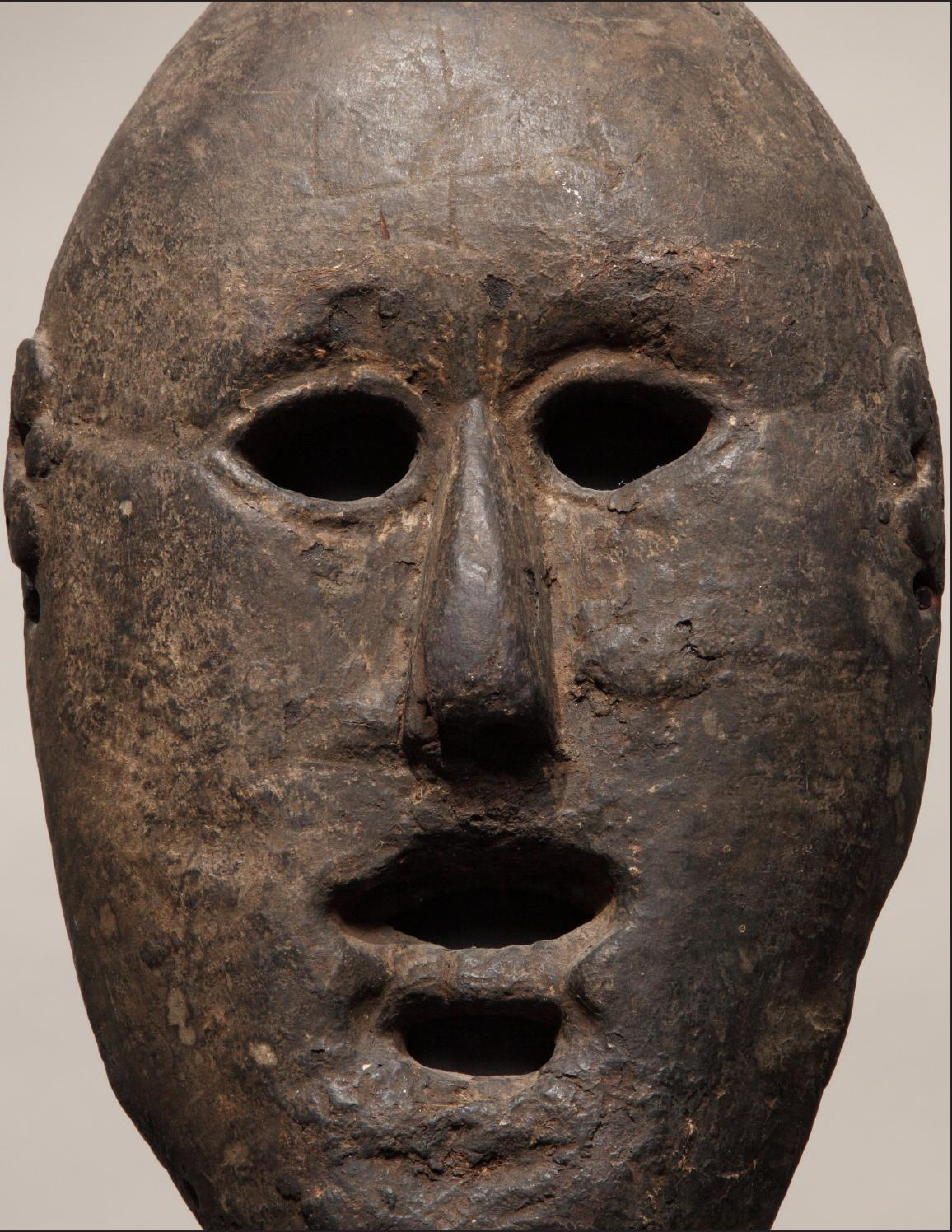
Himalayan Mountain Tribal Mask with Saivite markings on the forehead in the form of Shiva's Trident. A rare Double mouthed mask.

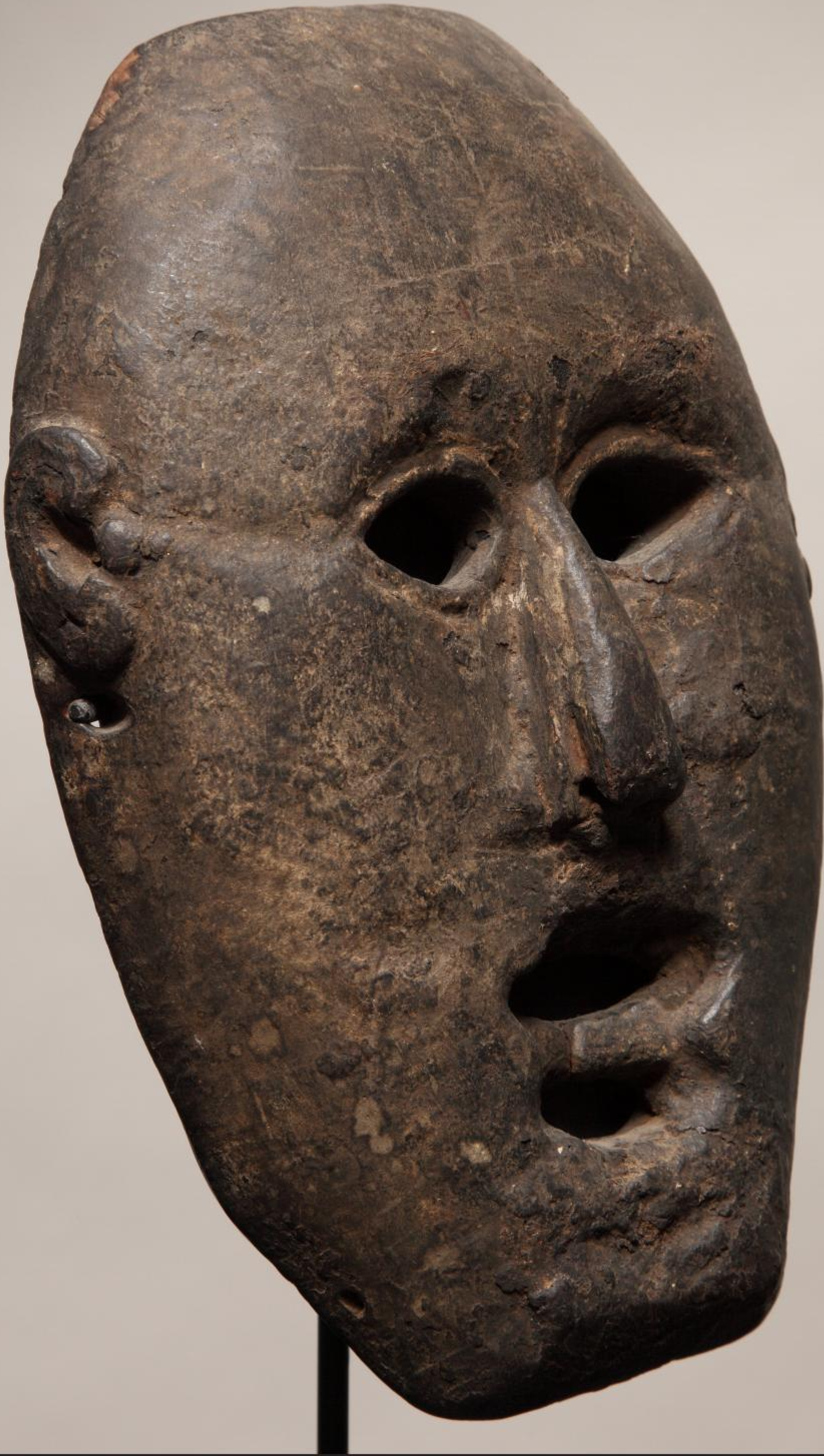
Nepalese and Tibetan Masks are one of the symbols that better represent the culture and traditions of people living in the Himalayan region.
The ritual of wearing masks is very old and it comes from animists Himalayan tribes used to worship spirits of nature and guardians of these majestic mountains.

The Shamans of these tribes used to wear masks during rituals they use to perform in order to protect the village, heal diseases, practice exorcisms or other purposes.

Masks had a very important functions in the social life of these community as they were used also during theatrical representations and ceremonies dedicated to ancestors. Hindu and Buddhist cultures, that became dominant in the surrounding regions, slowly replaced the myths of this shamanic cult. However, some of the old costumes survived.
Even spirits and demons were adopted by the Buddhist tradition and some of them became wrathful protectors of the Buddhist doctrine.

HIMALAYAN MOUNTAIN MASK | C.20TH CENTURY | Carved Wood on Stone | 15 x 7 x 3 Inches





In most of the literature on African art to about 1970, masks in this style and of this type were universally misattributed to the Bobo-Fing. The reason is that the Bwa have borrowed many of their cultural traditions from neighboring ethnic groups, especially the Bobo-Fing, Ko and Nuna.

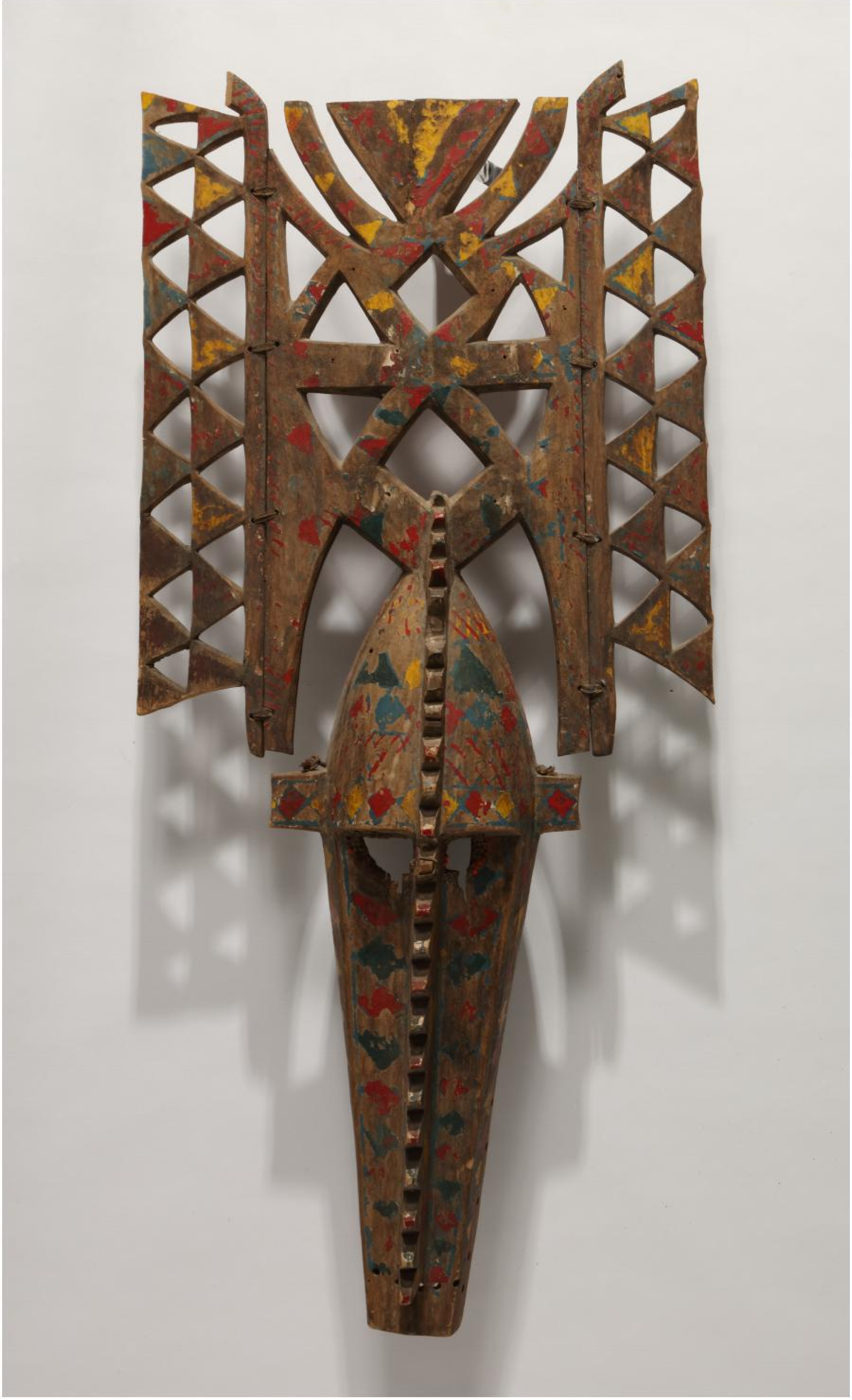
Among the culture elements borrowed from the Ko, who live to the northeast, was the tradition of carving wooden masks decorated with red, white, and black geometric patterns. The most spectacular of these masks adopted by the Bwa are the great plank masks, which are used in several southern Bwa villages, especially Boni, Dossi, and Pa. The Bwa in other areas, especially in the north near the border between Mali and Burkina Faso, do not use plank masks, or wooden masks of any type or style.

The Bwa people use art as an aid in maintaining balance between their lives and the powerful forces of nature, called Dyo. These masks were worn at important rites and events. At funerals, their presence was required for the safe passage of the dead between this realm and the next.

The mask imagery, a combination of geometric abstract patterns and animal/bird/human features, are based on local references to the relationships of lineages or clans to the Dyo. In the south, plank masks appear at several occasions throughout the year. The primary season for mask performances is from early March to early May, when the rains begin. Masks participate in funerals to honor the deceased, and are used in the initiations of young men and women who are taught the secrets of mask performances. Masks also cleanse the village of malevolent forces in an annual renewal rite.

There has been much speculation in the literature about the meanings associated with mask shapes and patterns. The hook shape that protrudes from the face is called the nose by all Bwa. The crescent at the top of the plank is the moon, and the checkerboard patterns represent the separation of good from evil, wise from stupid, male from female, dark from light.

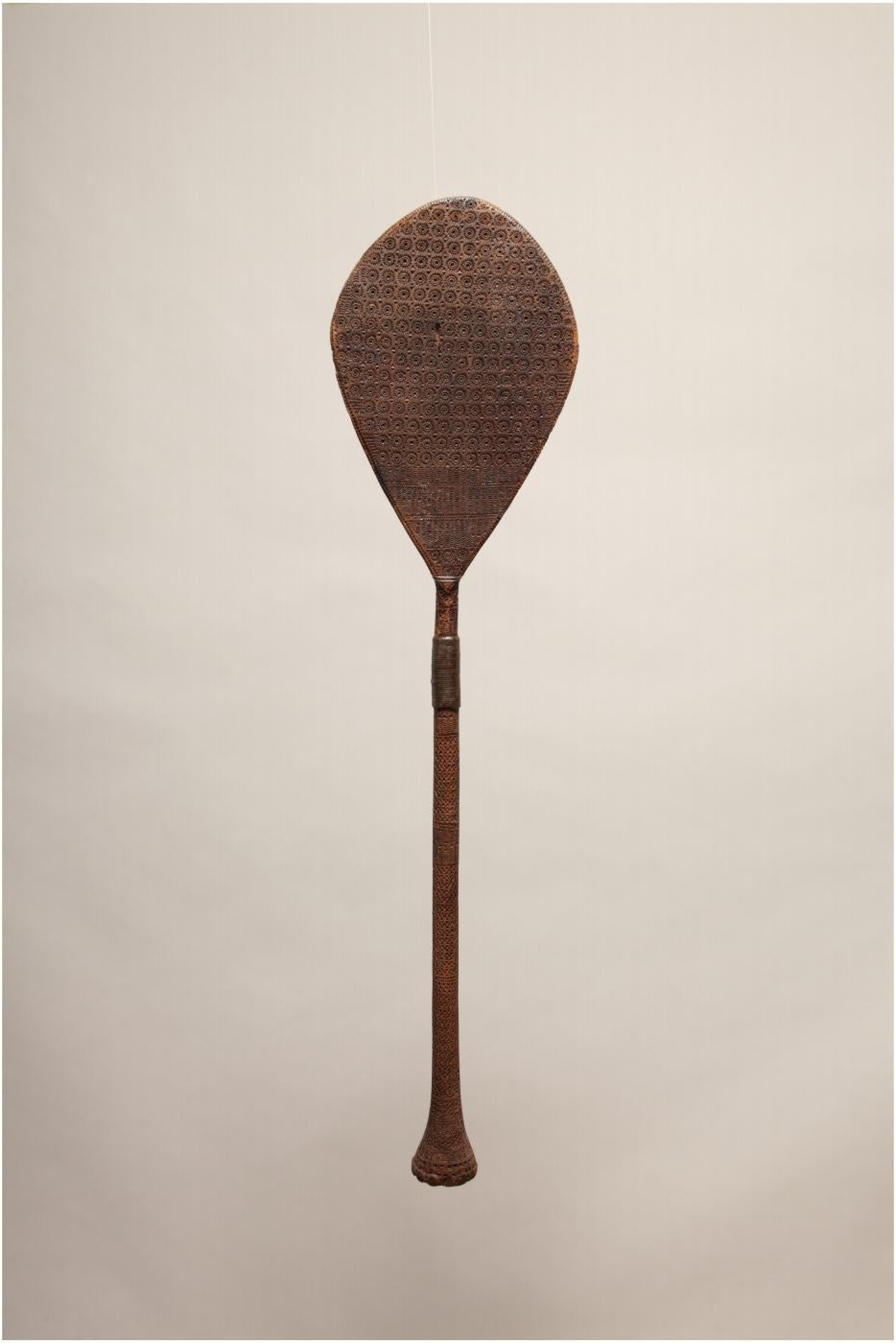
HELMET MASK (MOLO KELOPENE) | Wood And Pigment | 54 x 24 Inches



This Austral Island Paddle is carved from a single piece of wood. Tiny chip carved designs cover the entire surface of both sides of the paddle. The finial has been finely etched with seven Tiki heads in a circle. These intricate Austral Paddles, also known as Dance Paddles, are in rare museum grade condition. These masterpieces date between 1820-1840 AD. During this period paddles were used for trading and bartering with visiting European ships, which occasionally stopped by the islands for fresh water.

In the era before contact with Europeans, there were likely similar Dance Paddles crafted and used for traditional ceremonies and as objects of prestige. Ninety-nine percent of the paddles from the Austral islands were created to sell or trade with early travelers. Although paddles were common trade items, the superb workmanship of these particular paddles distringuishes them as prized works of art. The pommel is normally carved with stylized depictions of the goddess Arununa in a squatting position.

AUSTRAL ISLAND PADDLE | MID 19TH CENTURY | Square Handle | Wood| 38 x 8 x 2 Inches



This is a magnificent large ceremonial 'paddle' from Ra-ivavae or Tubuai in the Austral Islands, south of Tahiti. It is carved all over meticulously by a master carver using only a burin with a blade made from the triangular-shaped tooth of a mako shark. The large size is unusual but conveys the same symmetry and grace that has made Austral Island paddles famous, highly sought-after, works of art.

The rear of the blade has a similar rim, but is divided by a raised vertical band into two almost identical panels. One panel is covered with the unique Austral Islands 'toothed suns,' where other concentric circles are ringed with tiny equilateral triangular teeth known as 'niho'. The other panel has the same motifs but with a slightly different layout requiring more part rings to fill the space entirely. The rear of the blade has an outer rim of tiny scallop motifs.

The long shaft provides a graceful extension from the blade to the pommel. The shaft is also covered entirely with fine carving in circular panels round the shaft using again the double and the scalloped motifs.

AUSTRAL ISLAND PADDLE | MID 19TH CENTURY | Round Handle | Wood| 38 x 9 x 2 Inches

New Caledonia is a group of islands located approximately 1,500 kilometers northeast of Australia. The major islands are the large island of Grande Terre, the Isle of Pines, and the Loyalty Islands. New Caledonia is an overseas territory of France, with an indigenous population of around 85,000 people, known collectively as the Kanak.

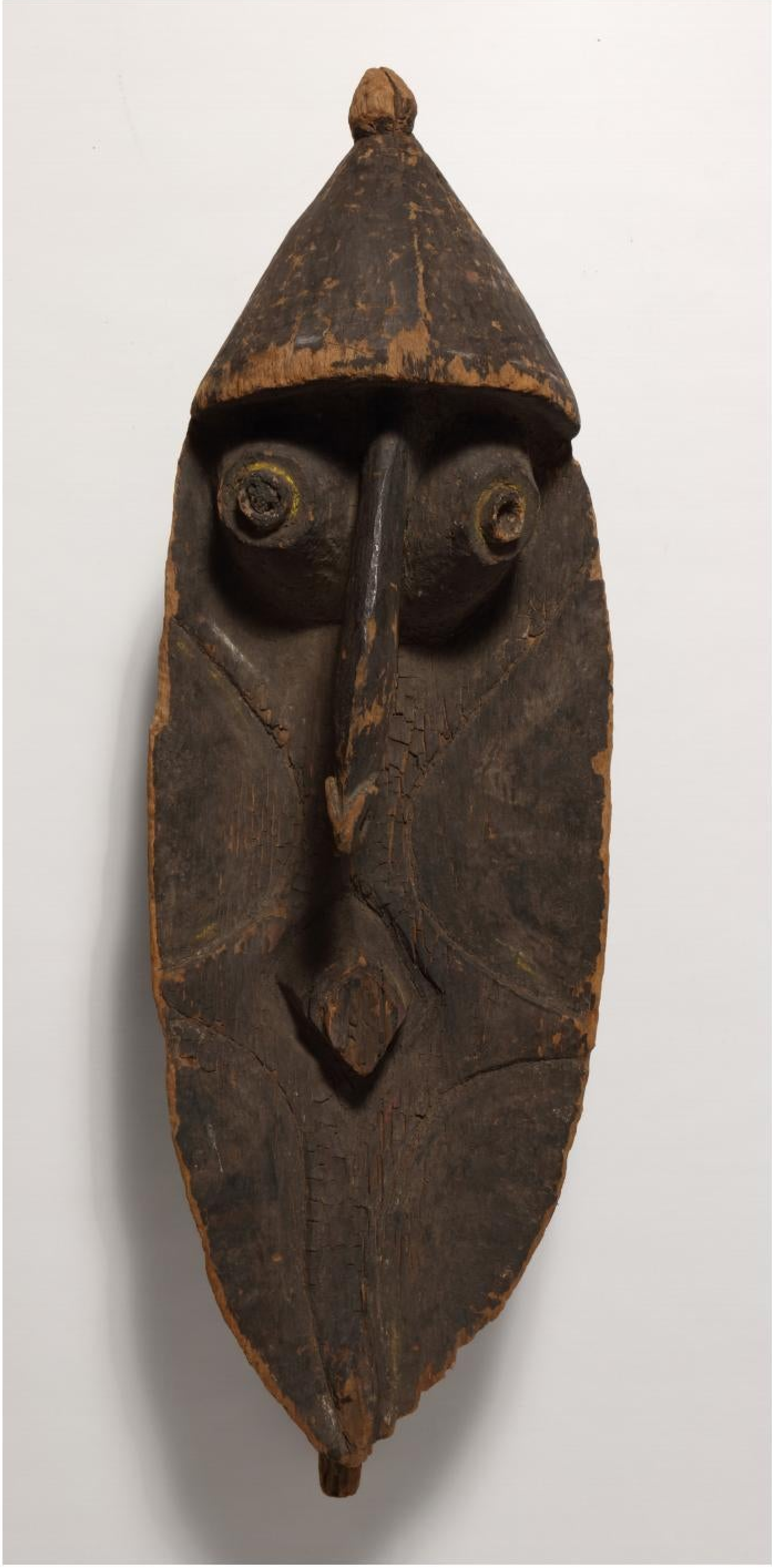
Kanak art has traditionally focused on propagating the status and importance of high-ranking chiefs. Each village is ruled by one chief, and he is glorified not only for his political authority, but also for his connection to the ancestral spirits, or duéé.

Wooden masks from New Caledonia were traditionally used as part of funerary ceremonies for chiefs. These masks are most often associated with the powerful god Gomawe, and are characterized by their black patina and prominent noses. Depending on the region from which the mask originated, there are two main types of noses: a flatter, broader nose, and a protruding, curved nose (sometimes referred to as the “beak style”).

In its complete form, the mask would have been adorned with a beard of human hair and a headdress surmounted by a mass of human hair cut from the heads of mourners. The masquerader was able to see through the crescent-shaped mouth, and usually wore a cloak made of pigeon feathers. The mask itself was painted black, which was the color applied to the bodies of mourners and symbolic of the roads leading to the land of the dead.

Chiefs also possessed a variety of prestige objects that were used during the course of their lifetimes. These include ceremonial axes made of greenstone that were used as ritual gifts of exchange.

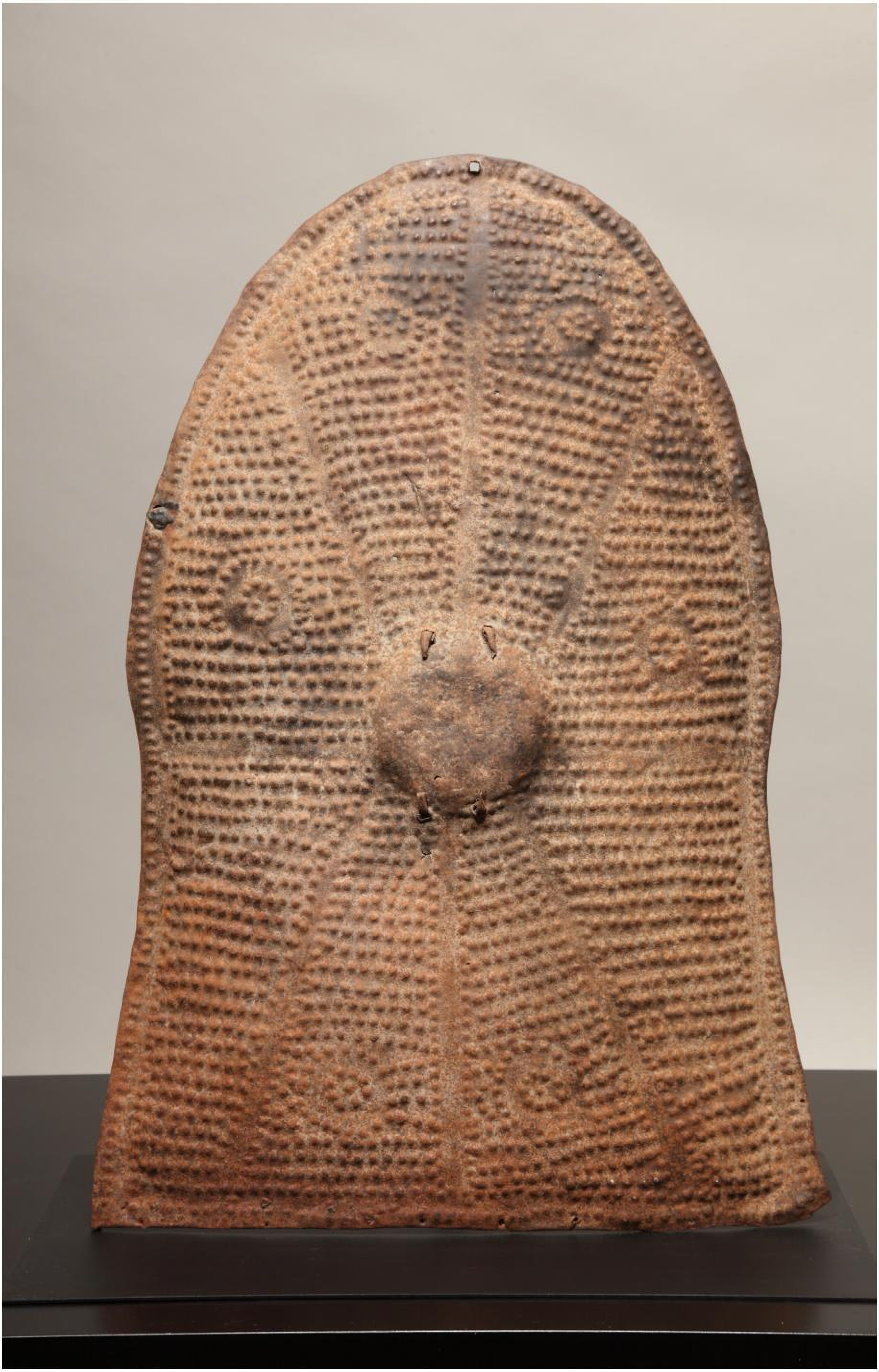
MONOLITHIC ANCESTRAL POST | NEW CALEDONIA OCEANIA | Wood And Pigment | 46 x 16 Inches

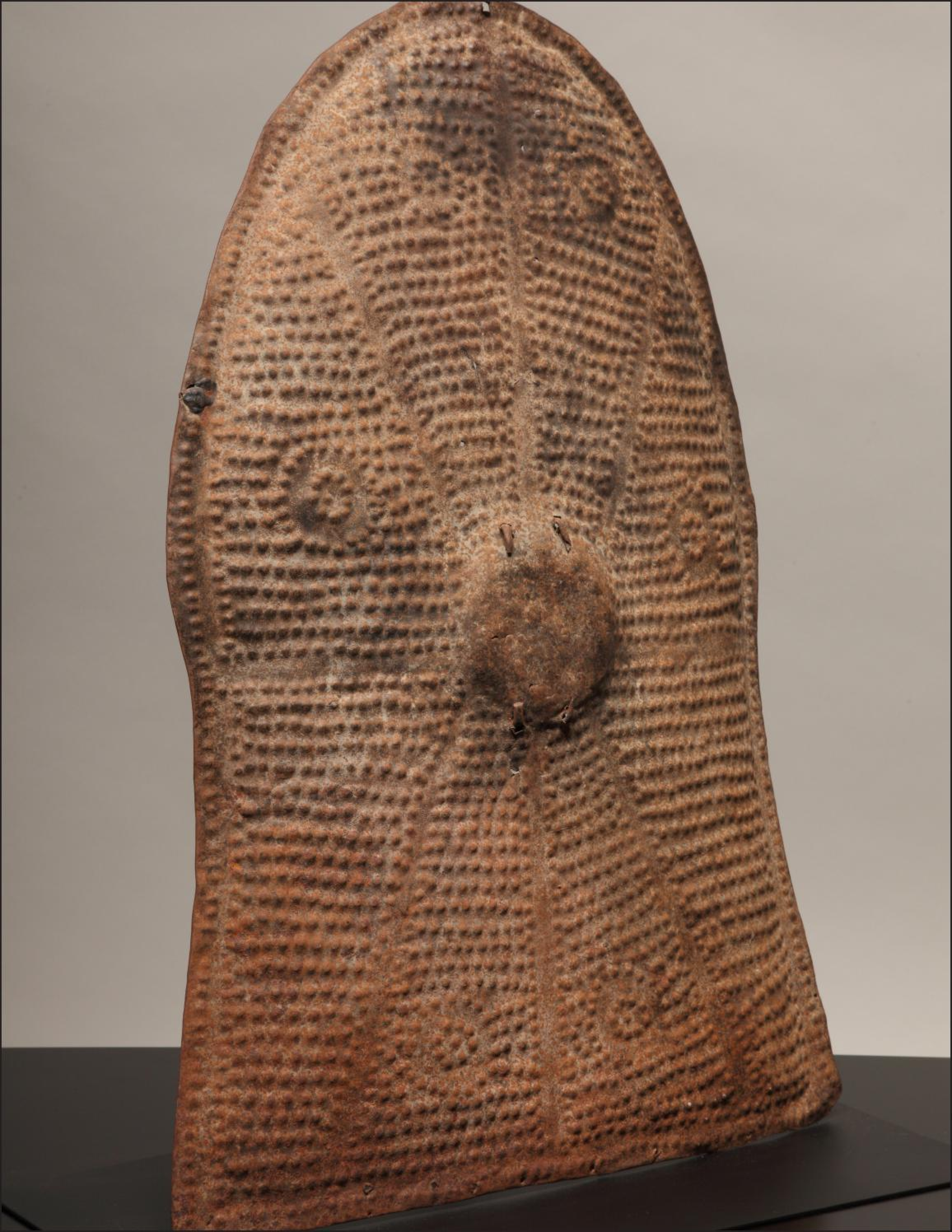


The Mandara (or Wandala) tribe is located just south of Lake Chad in both northern Cameroon and Nigeria. Their native language, called Wandala (or Kirdi-Mora), belongs to the Chadic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family. The Mandara occupy areas of the savanna in which mounds of rocks can be seen high above the plains. They also occupy a mountainous area where the Gotel and Mandara Mountains meet. This hot, tropical region has only 30 inches of rainfall each year. Baboons, chimpanzees, eagles, and giant hawks are among the animals that can be found there.

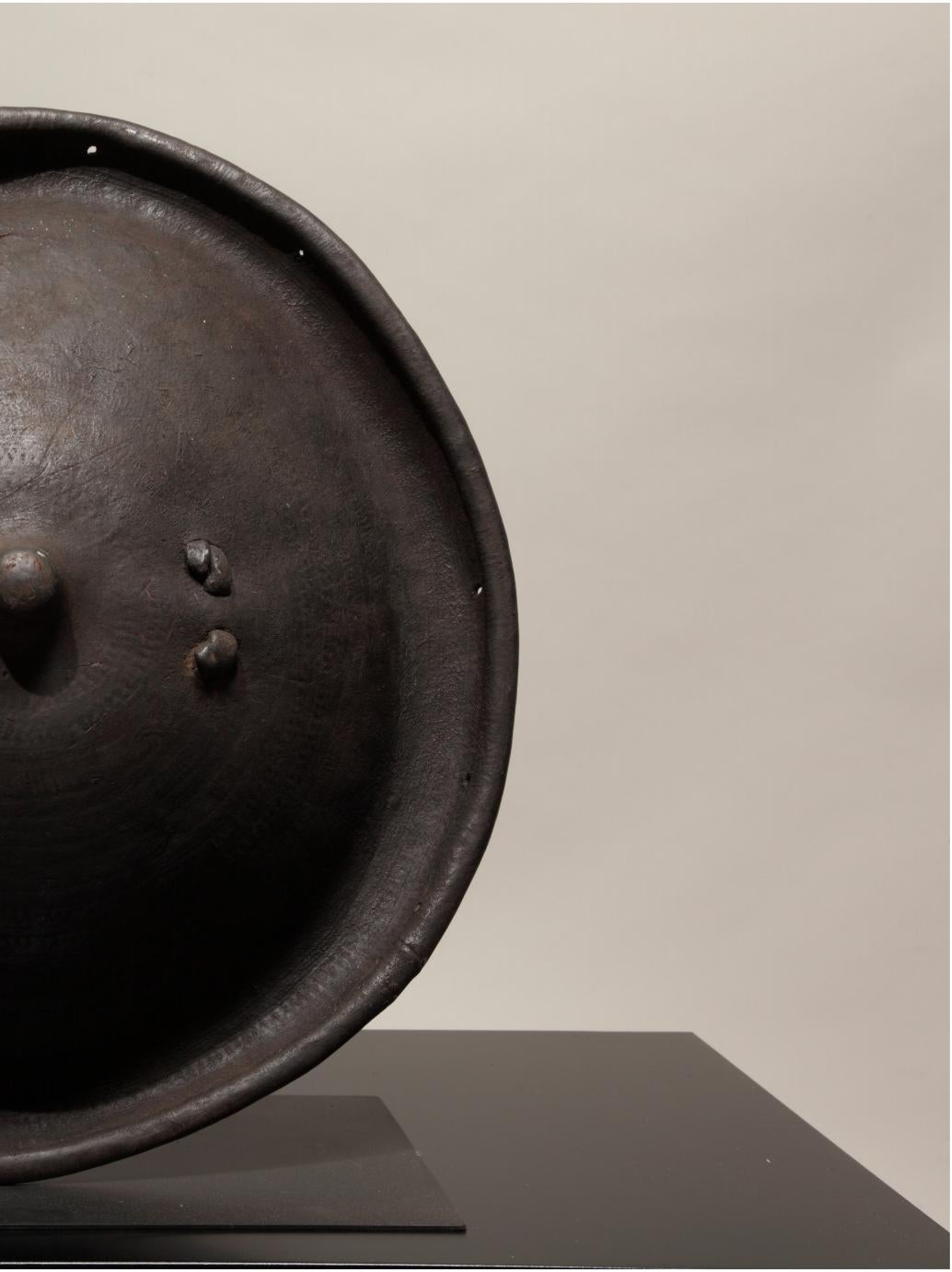
The Mandara are among other tribes of Sudanic herdsmen who migrate seasonally with their animals, searching for fresh grazing lands. In contrast, the tribes of southern Cameroon live in permanent villages in the forests. The northern tribes are primarily Muslim; whereas, the people of the southern areas follow traditional beliefs or Christianity. This is a rare hand-forged metal shield in a bell shape, decorated with dots in relief. Shields like this were used as both a defensive weapon and in symbolic rituals. The handle on the back is wrapped in leather. A shield, very similar to this one is in the Musée Dapper in Paris.

MANDARA (WANDALA) WAR SHIELD | CIRCA LATE 19TH CENTURY | Sheet Metal | 33 x 23 x 3 Inches

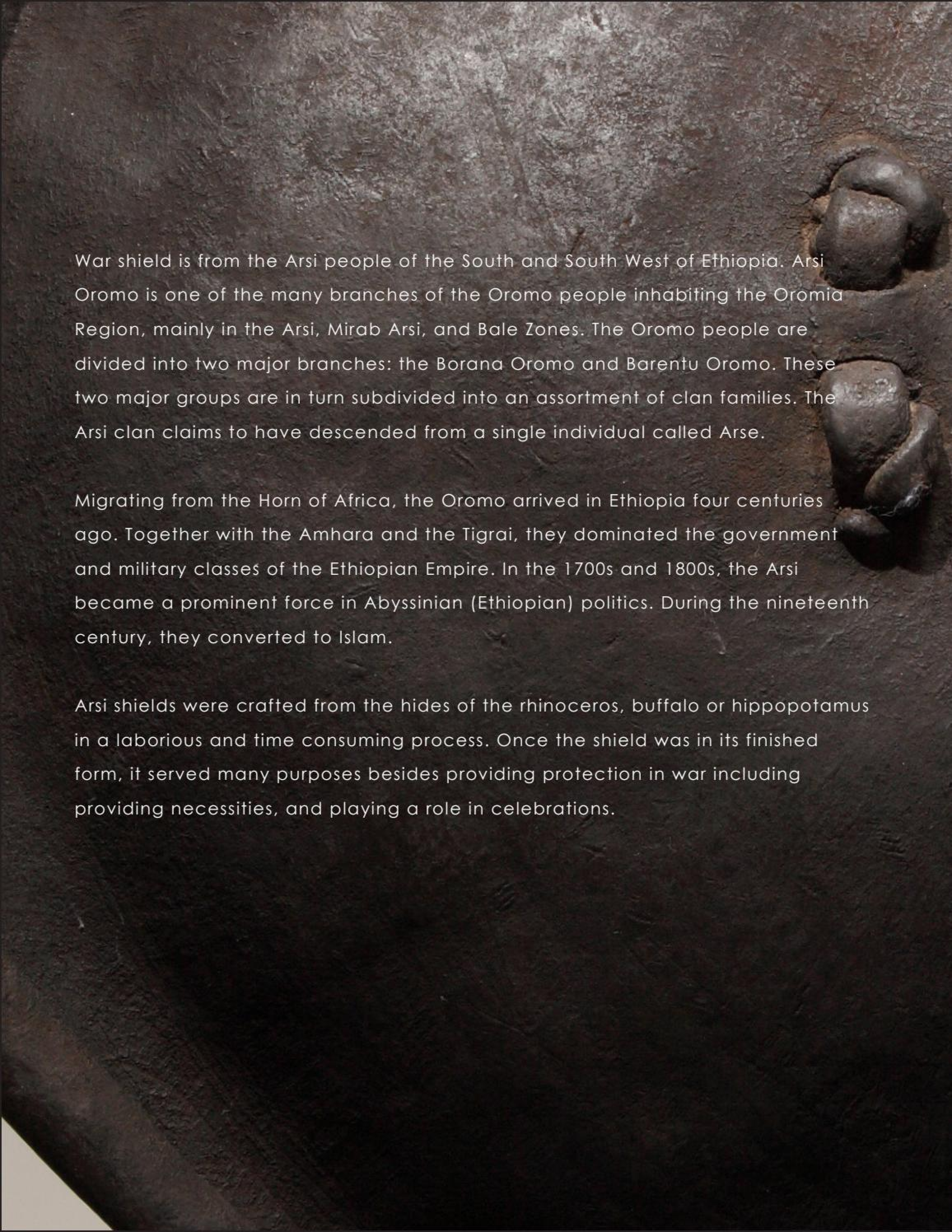




ARSI WA



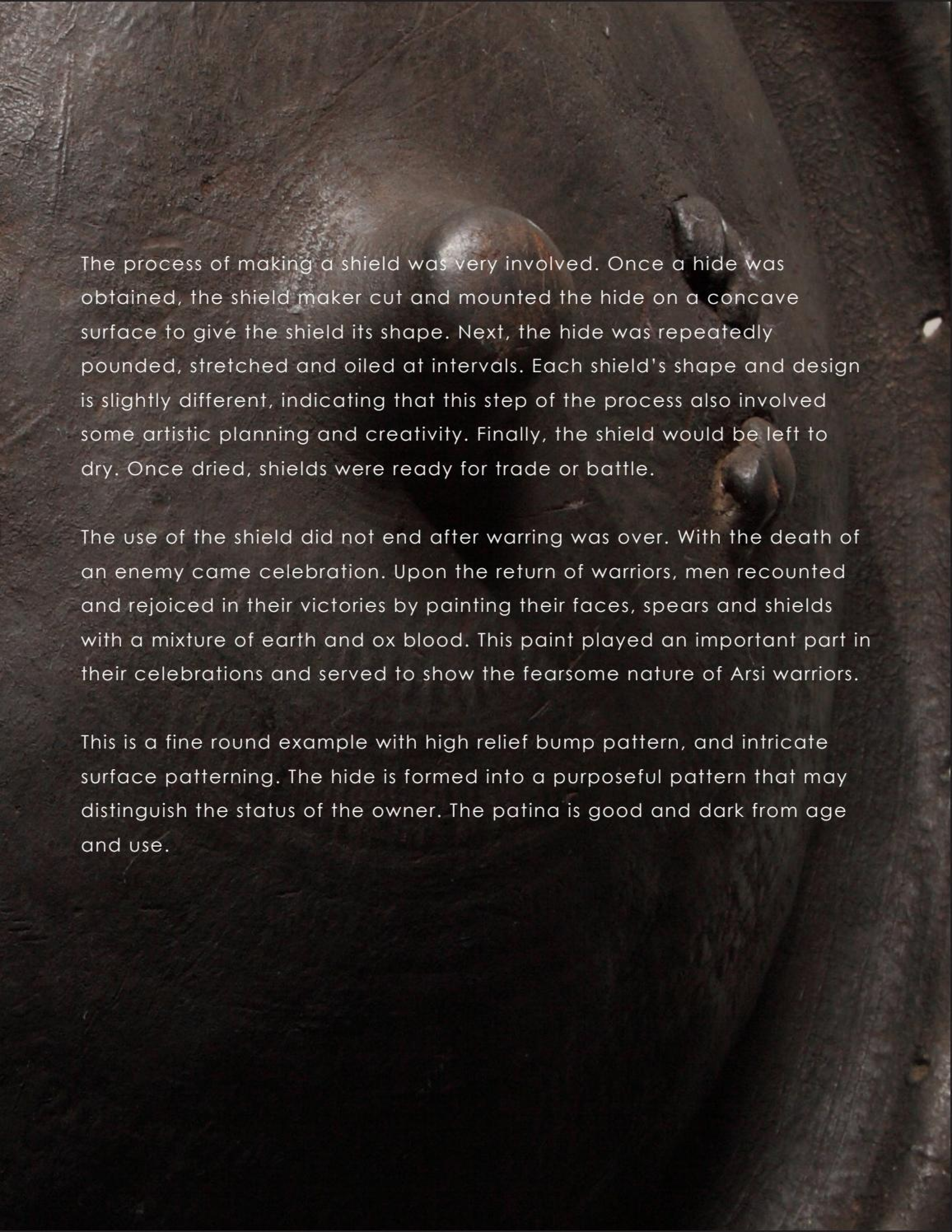
AR SHIELD | LATE 19TH - EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Rhino, Hippo, or Water Buffalo Hide | 28 x 29 x 3 Inches



War shield is from the Arsi people of the South and South West of Ethiopia. Arsi Oromo is one of the many branches of the Oromo people inhabiting the Oromia Region, mainly in the Arsi, Mirab Arsi, and Bale Zones. The Oromo people are divided into two major branches: the Borana Oromo and Barentu Oromo. These two major groups are in turn subdivided into an assortment of clan families. The Arsi clan claims to have descended from a single individual called Arse.

Migrating from the Horn of Africa, the Oromo arrived in Ethiopia four centuries ago. Together with the Amhara and the Tigrai, they dominated the government and military classes of the Ethiopian Empire. In the 1700s and 1800s, the Arsi became a prominent force in Abyssinian (Ethiopian) politics. During the nineteenth century, they converted to Islam.

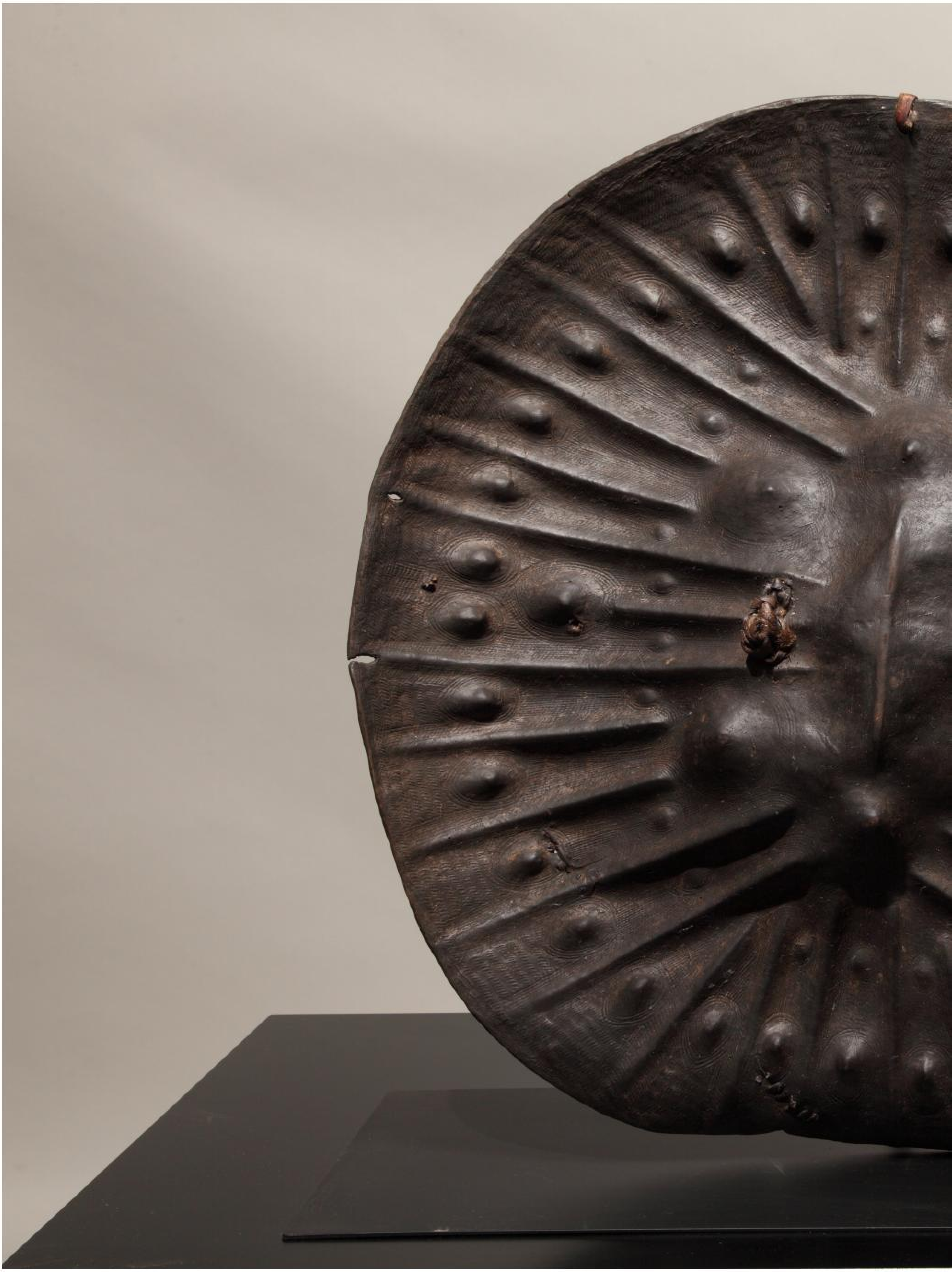
Arsi shields were crafted from the hides of the rhinoceros, buffalo or hippopotamus in a laborious and time consuming process. Once the shield was in its finished form, it served many purposes besides providing protection in war including providing necessities, and playing a role in celebrations.



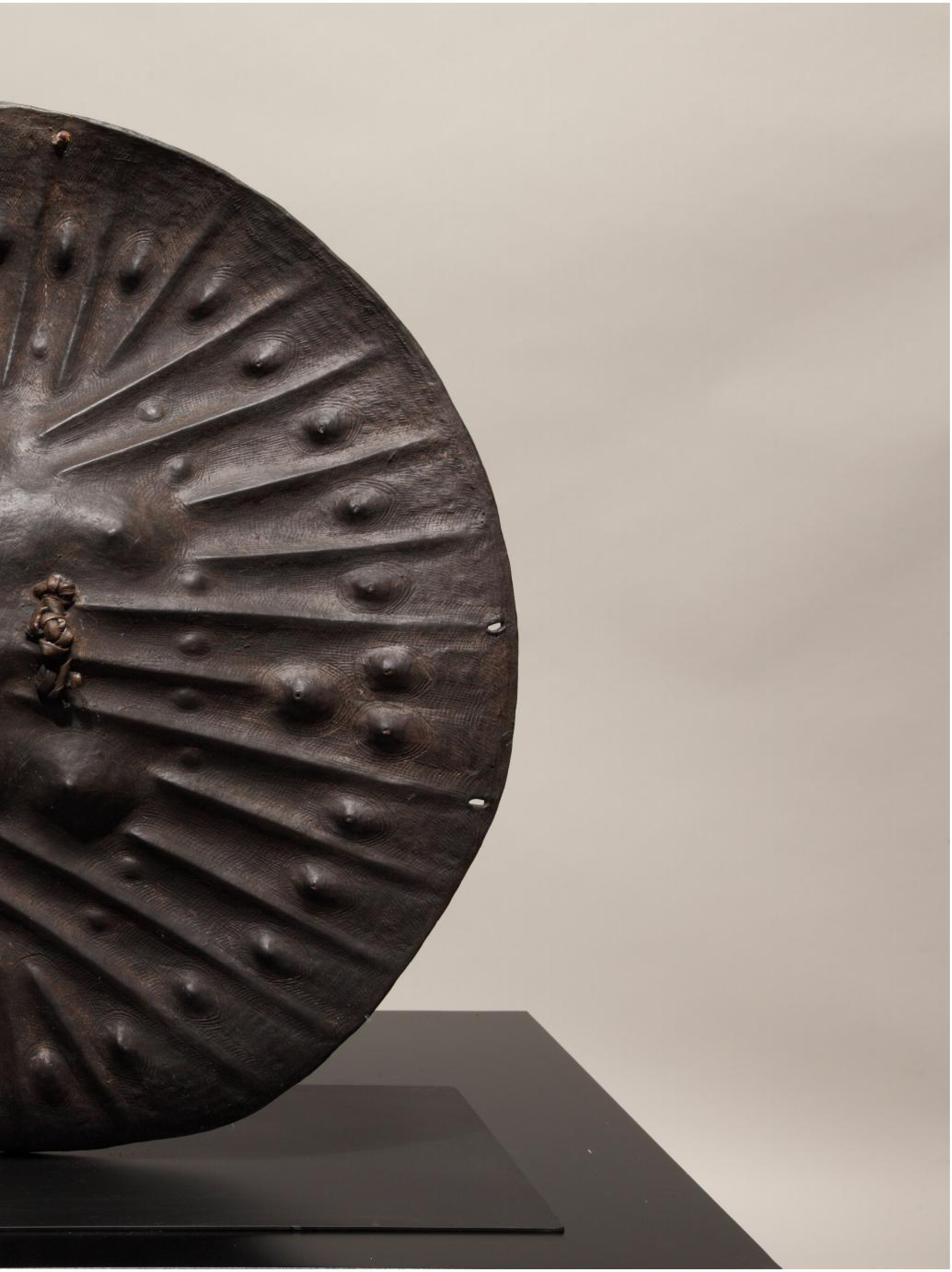
The process of making a shield was very involved. Once a hide was obtained, the shield maker cut and mounted the hide on a concave surface to give the shield its shape. Next, the hide was repeatedly pounded, stretched and oiled at intervals. Each shield's shape and design is slightly different, indicating that this step of the process also involved some artistic planning and creativity. Finally, the shield would be left to dry. Once dried, shields were ready for trade or battle.

The use of the shield did not end after warring was over. With the death of an enemy came celebration. Upon the return of warriors, men recounted and rejoiced in their victories by painting their faces, spears and shields with a mixture of earth and ox blood. This paint played an important part in their celebrations and served to show the fearsome nature of Arsi warriors.

This is a fine round example with high relief bump pattern, and intricate surface patterning. The hide is formed into a purposeful pattern that may distinguish the status of the owner. The patina is good and dark from age and use.



ARSI WAR SHIELD,



STRIPES | LATE 19TH - EARLY 20TH CENTURY | Rhino, Hippo, or Water Buffalo Hide | 28 x 29 x 3 Inches

Ceramics are a specialized art form among Lobi, with women apprenticing to learn the requisite skills and certain groups specializing in production. Their technique, though not unique, is extraordinary to behold. Women form the rounded base of vessels by pressing their hands directly into a lump of clay and then carefully building up the walls by adding coils. Using a corncob or fruit peel, a woman will smooth and refine the form before burnishing it with a flat stone. African lobi pots were used in temples and homes across Africa throughout the 20th century.

This wonderfully old designed etched Clay pot from the Lobi people of Burkina Faso. The Africa Lobi or Bobo clay tribal pot is hand made. This clay pot would have been used to store water or traditional beer for the household. This would be a wonderful decorative display piece in your home or office, as well as a gift.

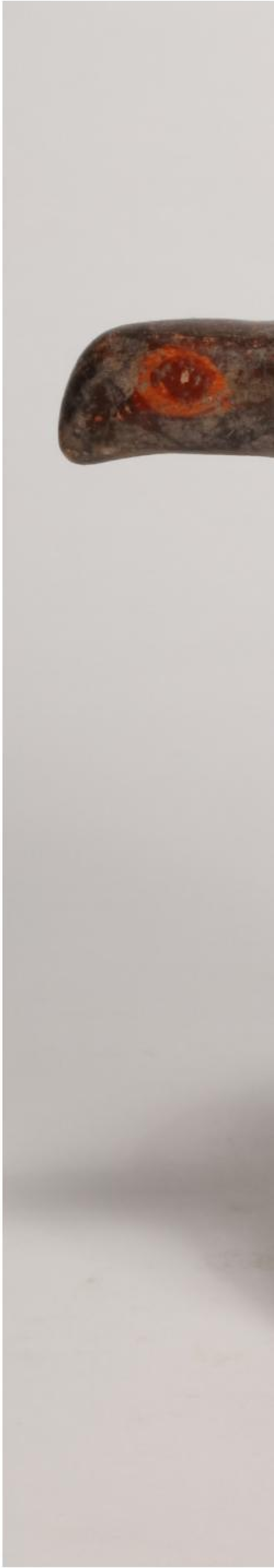
LOBI BEER BREWING POT | 19TH CENTRUY | Ceramic | 24 x 27 x 27 Inches

LOBI DECORATED POT | 19TH CENTURY | Ceramic | 25 x 22 x 22 Inches

Beautifully painted cylinder vases were used by the Maya ruling elite for drinking chocolate beverages. This vase is painted with an elaborately rendered hieroglyphic date in the Maya calendar, which is equivalent to December 5, 611. Maya artists produced world-class pottery. To make their pottery, the ancient Maya used clay from the riverbeds. They strengthened it by adding calcite, quartz, or volcanic ash

Maya potters used clay coils to build their pots, which was a slow process. After building the coils up as high as they wanted, they smoothed the coils together with their fingers. They also used clay slabs to make ceramic boxes. Potters may have used a device called a k'abal, which is a wooden platform that is rotated with the feetTo bake their unglazed pieces, Maya potters used low-temperature ovens heated by wood fires. These were often pits in the ground.

To decorate the pottery with scenes of court life, ceramists used slip paint, which is a mixture of finely ground pigment, clay, and water. The heat of the ovens would have destroyed many of the dyes the potters could have used to decorate their pottery. So they used just a few colors that could stand up to the heat. These included black made from manganese, yellows and browns made from limonite, and oranges and reds made from hematite. These minerals are common throughout the Mesoamerican rainforest today.



OLMEC VESSEL | CIRCA 600 AD | Mixed Media on Wood | 9 x 10 Inches

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